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THE
TRAGEDIES
OF
EURIPIDES.



THE
TRAGEDIES
OF
EURIPIDES.

TRANSLATED
BY R. POTTER.

VOL. II.

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IPHIGENIA IN AULIS.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

AGAMEMNON

MENELAUS

ACHILLES

CLYTEMNESTRA

IPHIGENIA

ATTENDANT

MESSENGER

CHORUS, FEMALES OF CHALCIS.

IPHIGENIA IN AULIS.

THE translator thought it not improper to arrange the tragedies of Euripides, as he had before arranged those of Æschylus, according to the historical series of their subjects. He did not indeed lay any stress upon this, nor claim any merit from it; but as he flattered himself that it would be agreeable to the English reader, he could not think it a matter of the most trifling consideration. The propriety of this arrangement will be most evident in this volume, as all the following tragedies have relation to the Trojan war and the events which arose from it: these are great and important, have a close connection, and reflect light on each other by being thus placed in regular succession.

The combined fleet of Greece was assembled at Aulis, and had been long detained there by contrary winds: the Oracle declared that they would not be permitted to sail, unless Iphigenia were sacrificed to Diana; but that, if the goddess were thus propitiated, they should reach the Phrygian shore, and lay the towers of Troy level with the ground. Upon this Agamemnon had been prevailed upon to send for his daughter, under pretence of giving her in marriage to Achilles: the arguments of Ulysses, his affection for his brother, his desire of glory, his love of his country, and his reverence for the gods, had impelled him to this measure: but he had consented with reluctance,

and felt all the fondness of a father : this conflict of his mind is finely described throughout the drama : at length paternal tenderness prevails over all other considerations, he secretly forms measures to prevent her coming, is detected, and disappointed. Iphigenia arrives attended by her mother ; but instead of her nuptials with the most accomplished of all the Grecian princes, she soon learns that she is destined to bleed as a victim on the altar of Diana. Never did Euripides succeed better in painting scenes of distress ; never was he more powerful in exciting the softest emotions of pity. The characters of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra are admirably sustained : Aristotle seems to have formed a different judgment concerning that of Iphigenia, Poetic, c. xv. For the reader's satisfaction, the objection made by that critic and the defence of the poet are here subjoined. “ Aristotle's words are, ‘ Iphigenia is an instance of the inconsistent character : ‘ for there is no probable conformity between her fears ‘ and supplications at first, and her firmness and resolution afterwards.’ But how doth this appear, “ independently of the name of the great critic ? Iphigenia is drawn indeed, at first, fearful and suppliant ; “ and surely with the greatest observance of nature. “ The account of her destination to the altar was “ sudden, and without the least preparation ; and, as “ Lucretius well observes, nubendi tempore in ipso ; “ when her thoughts were employed, and, according to “ the simplicity of those times, confessed to be so, on “ her promised nuptials. The cause of such destination too, as appeared at first, was the private family “ interest of Menelaus. All this justifies, or rather “ demands, the strongest expression of female fear and “ weakness. ‘ But she afterwards recants, and volun-

“tarily devotes herself to the altar.’ And this with
 “the same strict attention to probability. She had
 “now informed herself of the importance of the case.
 “Her devotement was the demand of Apollo, and the
 “joint petition of all Greece. The glory of her
 “country, the dignity and interest of her family, the
 “life of the generous Achilles, and her own future
 “fame, were all nearly concerned in it. All this con-
 “sidered, together with the high, heroic sentiments of
 “those times, and the superior merit, as was believed,
 “of voluntary devotement, Iphigenia’s character must
 “have been very unfit for the distress of a whole tragedy
 “to turn upon, if she had not, in the end, discovered
 “the readiest submission to her appointment. But,
 “to shew with what wonderful propriety the poet
 “knew to sustain his characters, we find her, after all,
 “and notwithstanding the heroism of the change, in
 “a strong and passionate apostrophe to her native
 “Mycenæ, confessing some involuntary apprehensions
 “and regrets, the remains of that instinctive abhorrence
 “of death; which had before strongly possessed her.

“Once the bright star of Greece——

“But I submit to die.

“This I take to be not only a full vindication of the
 “consistency of Iphigenia’s character, but as delicate
 “a stroke of nature, as is, perhaps, to be found in any
 “writer.” *Comment. on the Epistle to the Pisos.*

Happy Euripides in such an advocate!—P. Brumoy
 has the same sentiments concerning the character of
 Iphigenia. The reasons he employs are nearly the
 same. “Only,” to continue the words of the same
 critic, “he confirms them all by shewing that the
 “Iphigenia of Racine, which is modelled not according

“ to the practice of Euripides, but the comment of
“ Aristotle, is, in all respects, so much the worse for
“ it.” The same must be said concerning the character
of Achilles, as it is drawn by Racine: P. Brumoy, in
the comparison, has well defended the Achilles of
Euripides “ on the sure principles of nature and com-
“ mon sense.” Yet, with him, we ought to allow
much to the different manners of different ages and
different nations: and, in justice to the merit of the
excellent Racine, we should reflect that he wrote for
the French nation, Euripides for the Athenians. It is
difficult to forbear pointing out the singular beauties of
this fine drama; but “ I have too much respect for the
“ understanding of my readers to take that liberty.”

The Scene is at Aulis, before the house of Agamemnon.

IPHIGENIA IN AULIS.

AGAMEMNON, ATTENDANT.

AGAM. **T**HOU old and faithful servant, from the house
Come forth.

ATT. I come. What recent care disturbs
The royal Agamemnon?

AGAM. Thou shalt know.

ATT. I haste: for not to sleep inclines my age,
Nor in these eyes is dull.

AGAM. What star is that
There sailing?

ATT. Sirius, in his middle height
Near the sev'n Pleiads riding.

AGAM. Not the sound
Of birds is heard, nor of the sea; the winds
Are hush'd in silence on the Euripus.

ATT. Why doth the royal Agamemnon then
Rush from his tent? Through Aulis quiet reigns,
And motionless the watch their station hold.
Let us go in.

AGAM. I envy thee, old man;
I envy all, who pass their lives secure
From danger, to the world, to fame unknown:
But those to greatness rais'd I envy not.

ATT. The dignity of life in greatness lies.

AGAM. Yet is that dignity unsafe: the chase
Of glory is delightful, but when won
It brings disquiet: one while from the gods,
Their worship ill directed, ruin comes;

One while the various and discordant views
Of men distract the mind, and wound its peace.

ATT. This I approve not in a potent chief.
Not to all good, without a taste of ill,
Did Atreus give thee birth: it must be thine
To joy, it likewise must be thine to grieve,
For thou art mortal born; and though perchance
To thee not pleasing, thus the gods decree.
The blazing lamp didst thou display, and write
That letter, which thou holdest in thy hand
E'en now; the writing didst thou blot; then seal;
And open it again; then on the floor
Cast it in grief, the warm tear from thine eye
Fast flowing, in thy thoughts distracted near,
As it should seem, to madness. What new care,
My royal lord, say what new care disturbs thee:
Tell me, impart it to me; to a man
Honest and faithful wilt thou speak, a man
By Tyndarus of old sent to thy wife,
A nuptial present, to attend the bride,
One of tried faith, and to his office just.

AGAM. To Leda were three beauteous daughters born,
Phœbe, and Clytemnestra now my wife,
And Helena: to her the youths of Greece,
Those of the noblest rank, as wooers came.
Each menac'd high, on deeds of blood resolv'd,
Should he not win the virgin: this was cause
To Tyndarus her father of much doubt,
To give, or not to give her, and how best
To make good fortune his: at length this thought

46. Apollodorus and Natalis Comes have given us the names of these wooers: they were Ulysses, Diomedes, Antilochus, Agapenor, Sthenelus, Amphilocheus the son of Cteatus, Thaliarchus, Meges, Amphilocheus the son of Amphiarachus, Menestheus, Schedius, Polixenus, Penelopeus, Ajax the son of Oileus, Ascalaphus, Talmenus, Elephenor, Eumelus, Polyphætus, Leonteus, Podalirius, Machaon, Philoctetes, Eurypylus, Protesilaus, Menelaus, Ajax and Teucer sons of Telamon, and Patroclus.

51. Apollodorus assigns this provident counsel to Ulysses, for which Tyndarus assisted him in obtaining the nuptials of Penelope.

Occurr'd, that each to each the wooers give
 Their oath, and plight their hands, and on the flames
 Pour the libations, and with solemn vows
 Bind their firm faith that him, who should obtain
 The virgin for his bride, they all would aid;
 If any dar'd to seize and bear her off,
 And drive by force her husband from her bed,
 All would unite in arms, and lay his town,
 Greek or Barbaric, level with the ground.
 Their faith thus pledg'd, the aged Tyndarus
 Beneath them well with cautious prudence wrought;
 He gave his daughter of her wooers one
 To choose, tow'rd's whom the gentle gales of love
 Should waft her: and she chose (O had he ne'er
 Obtain'd that envied favour!) Menelaus.
 To Lacedemon now the Phrygian came,
 The judge between the beauties of the sky,
 So fame reports him: gorgeous was his dress,
 Glitt'ring with gold and vermeil-tinctur'd dies,
 Barbaric elegance; he lov'd, was lov'd,
 And bore the beauteous Helena away
 To Ida's pastoral groves; for Menelaus
 Was absent then: deserted thus through Greece
 He rav'd, the oaths attesting giv'n of old
 To Tyndarus, conjuring all t' avenge
 His wrongs. On this the Grecians rush to war,
 And taking arms come hither to the straits
 Of Aulis, furnish'd well with ships, with spears,
 And num'rous chariots: me they chose their chief,
 Doing a grace to Menelaus, for that
 I am his brother. O that this high honour

53. This excellent poet hath no longer left us to wonder what cause could unite all the princes of Greece in a dangerous and destructive war to recover a perfidious woman: by this oath they were bound to assist the injured husband, and among the ancients the religion of an oath was inviolable: with great judgment and propriety is the confederacy formed against any invading power, Greek or Barbaric, which obliged them to carry the war into Asia.

58. For ἀπώτασθαι, v. 63. Markland and Musgrave read ἀποδίδωμι.

Some other had receiv'd, not I! The troops
 Collected and embodied, here we sit
 Unactive, and from Aulis wish to sail
 In vain. The prophet Calchas, 'midst the gloom
 That darken'd on our minds, at length pronounc'd
 That Iphigenia, my virgin daughter,
 I to Diana, goddess of this land,
 Must sacrifice: this victim giv'n, the winds
 Shall swell our sails, and Troy beneath our arms
 Be humbled in the dust; but if denied,
 These things are not to be. This when I heard,
 I said that by the herald's voice the troops
 Should be discharg'd, for never would I bear
 To slay my daughter; till my brother came,
 And, urging many a plea, persuaded me
 To bear these dreadful things. I wrote, I seal'd
 A letter to my wife, that she should send
 Her daughter, to Achilles as a bride
 Affianc'd: of his worth I spoke in terms
 Of amplest honour; said he would not sail
 With Greece, unless from us his nuptial bed
 Was deck'd in Phthia: with my wife this found
 Easy belief, the false tale that announc'd
 Her daughter's destin'd marriage. Of the Greeks
 None but Ulysses, Calchas, and my brother
 To this are conscious. What I then resolv'd
 Imprudently, I prudently retract,
 Committed to this letter, which thou saw'st me
 This night, old man, unfold and fold again.
 Take then this letter, haste, to Argos go.
 That there is written, in its secret folds
 Enclos'd, I will explain to thee; for thou
 Art faithful to my wife, and to my house.

ATT. Read it, explain its purport, that my words
 May aptly with thy writing correspond.

AGAM. "Whate'er my former letter gave in charge, [reads.

“ Daughter of Leda, this I write to thee,
“ That to Eubœa’s winding way thou send not
“ Thy daughter, nor to Aulis rising high
“ Above the waves ; for to some other time
“ The nuptials of the virgin we defer.”

ATT. Will not Achilles, frustrate of his bride,
Be fir’d with rage ’gainst thee, and ’gainst thy wife?
This might be dang’rous : is not such thy thought?

AGAM. His name indeed we used, but nothing more :
Achilles knows not of the nuptials, knows
Of our transactions nought, nor that I nam’d
My daughter his, as to his bed betroth’d.

ATT. This, royal Agamemnon, is a deed
Of perilous daring. So thy daughter, nam’d
A bride to him who from a goddess draws
His birth, thou ledd’st a victim for the Grecians.

AGAM. Distraction’s in the thought : unhappy me,
My misery sinks me ! But away ; to age
Remitting nothing, use thy utmost speed.

ATT. I hasten, king.

AGAM. Now sit not on the bank
Of shaded fountain, nor indulge to sleep.

ATT. Think better of me.

AGAM. Take good heed, where’er
The ways divide, observing that the car,
Whose wheels swift-rolling bear my daughter hither
Where rides the fleet of Greece, escape thee not.

ATT. I shall observe.

AGAM. Now haste thee from the tent.
If on thy way thou meet her, backward turn
Her reins, and send her to Mycenæ’s walls
Rais’d by the Cyclops.

ATT. How, if I shall say
This to thy wife and daughter, shall I gain
Belief?

AGAM. This seal, whose impress on that letter
Thou bear’st, take with thee. Go ; that silver light
Shews the approach of morn ; the harbinger

Of the sun's fiery steeds. Be in my toils
 Assistant to me: for of mortals none
 Knows a pure course of unmix'd happiness;
 None yet was born without a share of grief.

CHORUS.

STRO. 1. Thus have I reach'd the sandy shore
 Where Aulis rises from the dashing wave,
 Nor fear'd its foam to brave,
 The narrow Euripus advent'ring o'er;
 My native Chalcis left, that feeds the pride
 Of the swift current hast'ning to the main,
 Illustrious Arethusa's silver tide.
 The Grecian camp, the Grecian fleet, the train
 Of Demigods I wish to see,
 Who with a thousand ships, that wait to bear
 'Gainst Troy the vengeful war,
 (For thus our husbands say the states decree)
 By the imperial Agamemnon led,
 In arms for bright-hair'd Menelaus arise,
 And Helen ravish'd from his nuptial bed;
 Her from Eurota's sedgy bank his prize
 The shepherd Paris bore away,
 The gift of Venus on that day
 When, nigh the dewy fountain as she stood
 Contending with the rival forms of heav'n,
 To her the palm of beauty giv'n,
 In all her radiant charms the goddess glow'd.

156. The Euripus, which divides Eœotia from Eubœa, is very narrow in the part between Aulis and Chalcis: from this town the females, who form the Chorus, come to see the camp and navy of the Grecians, of which in this ode they give an account. A regular and circumstantial enumeration of the ships and forces would have had a very ill effect in the drama; but the poet has with great art placed this prodigious armament in a manner before our eyes, and, by giving us a view of the confederate powers of Greece, impressed our minds with a sense of the importance of the sacrifice of Iphigenia.

162. There are four rivers of this name, one at Syracuse, one at Smyrna, one at Ithaca, and this at Chalcis.

171. Eurotas is the celebrated river of Sparta.

ANTIS. 1. Diana's hallow'd grove I seek,
 Where to the goddess frequent victims bleed,
 And through it pass with speed,
 The warm blush kindling on my youthful cheek,
 Ardent my wish to view the guard of shields,
 The armed tents of Greece extended wide,
 Their horse in warlike muster o'er the fields,
 And all the glorious scene of martial pride.

There either Ajax struck my sight,
 One from Oileus draws his birth, and one

From greater Telamon,
 Salamis glories in her hero's might.

These sitting with Protesilaus I saw

Delighted with the various-figur'd die.

But Palamedes, proud his birth to draw

From Neptune, with Tydides whirl'd on high

The massy discus: Merion there

Rejoic'd the manly sport to share,

Wond'rous the hero's form and martial grace;

Ulysses there, whose island's craggy brow

Frowns o'er the darken'd waves below;

And Nireus, fairest of the Grecian race.

EPOD. 1. Swift as the winged wind

200. The poet hath here given us a picture of ancient manners in the sports of the Grecian princes during their stay at Aulis. Protesilaus and a party with him are entertaining themselves at the game of Chess, while the more active Diomede and others are engaged in the manly exercise of the Discus. The swift Achilles, who commands our attention for his birth and education, *Τὸν ἄ Θέρις τίς, καὶ Χείρων ἐξέπύνασεν*, is finely characterised as in his arms and on foot contending in the course with the horses of Eumelus; even his diversions are heroic, and such as no hero, but Achilles, could engage in. With Eumelus the English reader is already acquainted as the son of Admetus and Alcestis: his coursers are thus described by Homer, B. ii. l. 926.

Eumelus' mares were foremost in the chase,

As eagles fleet, and of Pheretian race;

Bred where Pieria's fruitful fountains flow,

And train'd by him who bears the silver bow.

Fierce in the fight, their nostrils breath'd a flame,

Their height, their colour, and their age the same;

O'er fields of death they whirl the rapid car,

And break the ranks, and thunder thro' the war. POPE.

Achilles, whom the goddess Thetis bore,
 And gave to Chiron in his rigid lore
 To train his infant mind,
 I saw : in all his arms array'd,
 The cumbrous equipage of war,
 His speed he o'er the strand display'd,
 Contending with the harness'd car :
 High o'er the beam I saw Eumelus rise,
 I heard his animating cries,
 And mark'd each courser beauteous to behold,
 Their glitt'ring bits emboss'd with gold :
 Those in the midst, the yoke that bear.
 Dappled with silvery marks their hair;
 And each on either side
 That wind, obedient to the guiding rein,
 With equal swiftness o'er the plain,
 Bright as the flaming gold, with pride
 On snow-white fetlocks bound :
 With rival speed I saw Pelides fly,
 In arms, the whirling chariot nigh,
 Light o'er the pebbled ground.
 STRO. 2. Hence to the numerous fleet I fly,
 A vast and glorious sight,

212. This passage is not only highly pleasing in itself, but very valuable, as it gives us a precise account of the manner in which the ancients harnessed four horses to the car: they were ranged abreast; the pair in the middle, called ζυγιοι, were yoked, and bore the pole; the two side horses, called σιρασφόροι, were managed by reins; therefore the ἀσείρωτον ὄχημα, Ion. v. 1151. "the unrein'd car," well expresses the biga, or car drawn by two horses. See the learned Mr. Jodrell's observations on that passage. As the poet here professes to give an exact description of the quadriga, this precision was necessary: but when Agamemnon speaks of Ulysses as

Ζευχθεὶς ἑταίμος ἦν ἐμὸι σιρασφόρος, Agam. Æschyl. v. 851.

Yoked in his martial harness from my side

Swerv'd not.

Neither the great poet in the word ζευχθεὶς, nor his excellent annotator Stanley in his expression *jugum secum ferentem*, nor the translator in the term yoked, which is literal from the original, have fallen inadvertently into an error: the inaccuracy, whatever it be, must be charged upon Æschylus, whose sublime and rapid genius disdained to be curbed, in an expression merely metaphorical, by a nice and minute attention to a circumstance of no consequence to his purpose.

To gratify my curious eye,
 A woman's dear delight.
 On the right wing from Phthia's strand
 The Myrmidons, a valiant band,
 In fifty gallant vessels ride;
 And by the Nereids we behold
 Bright on the prows in sculptur'd gold,
 Achilles' arms are signified.

ANTIS. 2. The Argive ships of equal oars
 Next these their station hold;
 The son of Talaus leads their pow'rs,
 And Sthenelus the bold.
 In order next th' Athenian train
 In sixty vessels plough the main,
 Their host the son of Theseus leads:
 Adorning the Munychian prows
 In arms a sculptur'd Pallas glows,
 Inspiring high heroic deeds.

* * * * *

The second Epode is lost.

STRO. 3. Bœotia's host I there survey'd,
 In fifty ships the warriors came:
 An imag'd form'd each ship display'd,
 Proud argument of Theban fame;
 High on each sculptur'd prow their Cadmus stands,
 A golden dragon holding in his hands;
 And Leïtus, who boasts his birth
 From those that sprung embattled from the earth,
 Commands their naval war.
 Those, who their race from Phocis draw,
 Rang'd on the foaming flood I saw.
 Oïlean Ajax there,
 Equal his numbers, leads the Locrian train,
 Leaving illustrious Thronion's plain.

ANTIS. 3. From high Mycenæ's rampir'd tow'rs,

Tow'rs by the lab'ring Cyclops wrought,
The son of Atreus leads his pow'rs ;

An hundred ships the monarch brought ;
And faithful at his side, as friend with friend,
These eyes beheld the injur'd chief attend ;

That for the fair, her house who fled,
Lightly preferring a barbaric bed,

Greece with a gen'rous rage
Might rise and vindicate his cause.

His troops from Pylos Nestor draws,

Reverend the warrior's age ;

On his tall vessels sculptur'd Alpheus stands,

A bull, and seems to spurn the sands.

EPOD. 3. From Ænia's stormy coast

By Guneus led twelve vessels plough the tide ;

The chiefs of Elis anchor by their side ;

These through th' extended host

Are call'd the brave Epëan train,

And Eurytus their force commands.

Dash'd by their oars the foaming main

Whitens beneath the Taphian bands ;

Meges their leader, from that dangerous shore,

Where rough Echinæ's vext rocks roar.

The Salaminian Ajax to the right

Stretches, the left wing to unite ;

The last in station, o'er the deep

His fleetest vessels circling sweep.

In all their gallant pride

I heard, I saw them stretch : to meet their war

Should the barbaric slight barks dare,

Shatter'd and sunk beneath the tide,

They will return no more.

280. This supposes that the fleet was ranged in a circular line ; when Ajax therefore, who was stationed on the left, stretched his squadron towards the right, he so far advanced to meet the ships of Achilles, which formed the right wing, and to unite the two extremities. *Heath.*

I heard, I saw; and all the warlike train
Faithful my memory shall retain,
When reach'd my native shore.

ATTENDANT, MENELAUS, CHORUS.

- ATT. This, Menelaus, is wrong; thou shou'dst not do it.
MEN. Go to: thou wou'dst be faithful to thy lords!
ATT. That is an honour to me, no reproach.
MEN. Wou'dst thou do what thou shou'dst not, thou shalt rue it.
ATT. Thou shou'dst not ope the letter, which I bear.
MEN. Thou shou'dst not bear what to all Greece is hurtful.
ATT. With others dispute that; leave this to me.
MEN. I will not let it go.
ATT. Nor will I yield it.
MEN. Soon shall thy head this sceptre stain with blood.
ATT. Nay, it were glorious for my lords to die.
MEN. Let go: a slave presuming to dispute!
ATT. My royal master, we are wrong'd: by force
Thy letter hath he wrested from my hands,
To what behoves him paying no regard.

AGAMEMNON, MENELAUS, ATTENDANT, CHORUS.

- AGAM. Why this indecent tumult at my doors?
ATT. My words have greater right than his t' inform thee.
AGAM. Why, Menelaus, this strife with him, this force?
MEN. Look, if thou dar'st, at me; then will I speak.
AGAM. Fear I, from Atreus born, to raise mine eye?
MEN. Dost thou see this, with basest orders charg'd?
AGAM. I see it: from thy hand first give it back.
MEN. Not till I've shewn all Greece what's written here.
AGAM. Know'st thou, this open'd, what thou shou'dst not know?
MEN. To wring thy heart, opening thy secret baseness.
AGAM. Where didst thou take it? Gods, hast thou no shame?
MEN. Watching from Argos if thy daughter comes.
AGAM. On my affairs a spy! How shameless this!
MEN. Urg'd by my will: for I am not thy slave.
AGAM. Have I not leave in mine own house to rule?

- MEN. How wayward is thy mind, thy present thoughts
At variance with the past, and soon to change!
- AGAM. Finely thy words are tun'd; but know thou this,
The wily tongue is a detested ill.
- MEN. The wav'ring mind is a base property,
And darkens to our friends: I will convince thee:
But if through pride thou turn thee from the truth,
Small share of praise shalt thou receive from me.
Thou knowest, when thy aim was to command
The troops of Greece at Troy, thy semblance form'd
As if affecting nothing, but thy wish
Most ardent; what humility was thine,
Pressing the hand of each, thy door to all
Was open, to the meanest, and thy speech
To all address'd in order, e'en to those
Who will'd no converse with thee, seeking thus
By courteous manners thy ambitious wish
To purchase. The supreme command obtain'd,
Soon were thy manners chang'd, and to thy friends
Not friendly as before; nor was access
Easy, oft too denied. Ill it becomes
An honest man, when rais'd to pow'r, to change
His manners, but then most to be approv'd
Firm to his friends, when through his advanc'd state
He most can serve them: this I urge against thee
As my first charge, where first I found thee base:
But when thou cam'st to Aulis, with the troops
Of Greece in arms, to nothing didst thou sink,
Astonish'd at thy fortune, by the gods
Denied a gale to swell thy sails. The Greeks
Requir'd thee to dismiss the ships, nor toil
In vain at Aulis: how dejected then
Thy visage, thy confusion then how great
Not to command the thousand ships, and fill
The fields of Priam with embattled hosts?
Me then didst thou address, What shall I do,
Or what expedient find, of this command,
Of this high honour not to be depriv'd?

When Calchas at the hallow'd rites declar'd
That to Diana thou must sacrifice
Thy daughter, and the Grecians then should sail.
With joy thy thoughts were heighten'd, willingly
The virgin as a victim didst thou promise,
And freely, not by force, (urge not that plea,)
Dost thou dispatch a message to thy wife
To send thy daughter hither, the pretence
Her nuptials with Achilles. But thy mind
Was soon averse, and secretly devis'd
Letters of diff'rent import; now in sooth
Thou wilt not be the murd'rer of thy daughter.
This air is witness, which hath heard these things
Of thee. To thousands this hath chanc'd in tasks
Of arduous nature, freely they engage,
Then from the high attempt retreat with shame,
Th' ill judgment of their countrymen in part,
Justice in part the cause, for in the proof
They feel their want of pow'r to guard the state.
But most I mourn th' unhappy fate of Greece,
Who, prompt her noble vengeance to inflict
On the barbarians, worthless as they are,
Shall let them now go scoffing off, through thee,
And through thy daughter. Never for his wealth
Would I appoint a ruler o'er the state.
Or chief in arms: wisdom should mark the man
Who in his country bears the sov'reign sway:
Every man sage in counsel is a leader.

CHOR. How dreadful, when 'twixt brothers words arise,
And fierce disputings kindle into strife!

AGAM. For this I will rebuke thee; but in brief,
Not raising high the eye of insolence,
But with more temperance, because thou art
My brother; for a good man loves to act
With modesty. But tell me, why with rage
Dost thou thus swell? why rolls thy blood-streak'd eye?
Who injures thee? of what art thou in want?
A rich connubial bed, is that thy wish?

This to procure thee is not in my pow'r.
Thou didst possess one, but ill govern'd it.
Shall I, who with no fault have e'er been charg'd,
Suffer for thy ill conduct? Is thy heart
Rack'd at my honours? But a beauteous wife
In thy fond arms it is thy wish to hold,
Transgressing decency and reason: base
Of a bad man the pleasures. But if I,
Before ill-judging, have with sober thought
My purpose chang'd, must I be therefore deem'd
Rest of my sense? Thou rather, who hast lost
A wife that brings thee shame, yet dost with warmth
Wish to regain her, would the fav'ring god
Grant thee that fortune. Of the nuptials eager
The suitors pledg'd to Tyndarus their oath,
Unwise: the hope, I ween, of the fair bride
Effected this, more than thy grace or pow'r:
Take these, and march to war; soon wilt thou find
What oaths avail ill plight'd, with slight thought,
And by compulsion. But I will not slay
My children: and thy wishes o'erleap justice,
The punishment of thy flagitious wife.
My nights, my days would pass away in tears,
Should I with outrage and injustice wrong
Those, who from me deriv'd their birth. These things
Have I replied to thee in brief, with ease
And plainness: but if thou wilt not be wise,
What concerns me I rightly will appoint.

CHOR. These words are different from his former speech,
And well the father's melting pity shew.

MEN. Ah me unhappy! I have then no friends.

AGAM. Yes, if thou wish not to destroy thy friends.

MEN. How wilt thou shew one father gave us birth?

AGAM. I would be wise, but not be mad with thee.

MEN. Friends with their friends in common ought to grieve.

AGAM. Be thy deeds friendly then, not painful to me.

MEN. And with all Greece shou'dst thou not bear this pain?

AGAM. All Greece, and thee, hath heav'n-sent frenzy seiz'd.

MEN. Thou gloriest in thy sceptre, and betray'st
Thy brother. But to other means I turn,
And other friends.

AGAMEMNON, MENELAUS, MESSENGER,
CHORUS.

MESS. I come, imperial lord
Of Greece, thy daughter leading, in thine house
Nam'd Iphigenia by thee; and thy wife
Attends her, Clytemnestra, with thy son
Orestes, sight delightful to thine eyes
After this tedious absence from thy home.
But wearied with this length of way, beside
A beauteous-flowing fountain they repose,
Themselves refreshing, and their steeds, unyok'd
To taste the fresh grass of the verdant mead.
I run to bring thee notice, that prepar'd
Thou may'st receive them: this the troops have heard;
For through the camp swift the report was spread
That Iphigenia is arriv'd, and all
Haste to the sight desirous to behold
Thy daughter; for to every eye the great
Appear illustrious, with high splendor grac'd.
Is this her bridal day, some ask, or what
Intended? Or through fond desire to see
His daughter did th' imperial Agamemnon
Send for the virgin? Others might'st thou hear,
The princess to Diana, queen of Aulis,
Will they present? Who shall receive her hand?
But haste, begin the rites, and crown thy head.
And thou too, royal Menelaus, prepare
The hymeneals; let the joyful house
Re-echo to the pipe and festive dance:
For happy to the virgin comes this day.

AGAM. 'Tis well: thou hast my thanks; but go thou in;
All things, if fortune favours, shall be well.—
Ah me, unhappy me, what shall I say,

And whence begin? In what a chain of fate
 Am I enfolded? Fortune, wiser far
 Than all my vain designs, hath closely wrought
 Beneath me. What advantages attend
 Ignoble birth? They are allow'd to weep,
 And utter sad complaints: but to the noble
 This is denied; led by the pride of rank,
 Which rules us, to the people we are slaves.
 I am indeed asham'd to drop the tear,
 And not to drop the tear I am asham'd,
 Fall'n as I am on these great miseries.
 Well, let it be: but how shall I address
 My wife, or how receive her? with what eye
 Look on her? For to all my former ills,
 Coming unbidden, she hath added weight
 Of new distress: yet decency requir'd
 Her presence with her daughter, to attend
 Her nuptials, and present the dearest gifts:
 There will she find me false. But thee, O thee,
 Unhappy bride, (bride call I thee! how soon
 To Pluto to be wedded!) how I pity!
 Methinks I hear her suppliant voice thus speak,
 "My father, wilt thou kill me? May'st thou make
 "Thyself such nuptials, and whoe'er to thee
 "Is dear." Orestes, standing near, shall cry
 In accents inarticulate, his speech
 As yet unform'd, articulate to me.
 Unhappy me! what ruin hath the son
 Of Priam brought on me! This Paris caus'd,
 When he espous'd the faithless Helena.

CHOR. I, as a woman and a stranger ought,
 Am mov'd with pity at a monarch's woes.

MEN. Give me thy hand, my brother, let me clasp it.

AGAM. I give it: thou art conqueror, I a wretch.

MEN. By Pelops, call'd the father of thy father
 And mine; by Atreus, whence we draw our birth,
 I swear, that what I now shall say to thee

Comes from my heart, nought feign'd, but what I think.
When from thine eye I saw thee drop the tear,
I pitied thee, and sympathizing dropp'd
Myself a tear: its former reas'nings now
My soul foregoes, no more unkind to thee,
But, as thou feelest, feels: nay, I exhort thee
Neither to slay thy daughter, nor to rank
What concerns me most high: it is not just
That grief should rend thy heart, whilst my affairs
Go pleasantly; that any of thy house
Should die, whilst mine behold the light: for what
Can be my purpose? Might I not contract
Other illustrious nuptials, if my wish
Were other nuptials? But at such a price,
My brother's ruin, which behoves me least,
Should I recover Helena, an ill
Dear with a blessing purchas'd? Folly rul'd
Before, and youth: but on a nearer view
I see what 'tis to yield a child to death.
Besides th' unhappy virgin, near allied
By ties of consanguinity, excites
My pity, destin'd, for a nuptial bed,
To fall a victim: what bath she to do,
The virgin daughter, with my Helena?
Discharg'd from Aulis let the troops depart.
And thou, my brother, cease to dew thine eyes
With tears, which cause the drops to start in mine.
Touching thy daughter hast thou oracles
Which respect me; no more be that respect;
My part I cede to thee; my thoughts are chang'd
From cruel, and I feel what I should feel:
Nature returns, and all a brother's love
Warm in my heart revives: of no bad man
The manners these, to follow still the best.

CHOR. Generous thy words, and worthy Tantalus
The son of Jove: thou dost not shame thy birth.

AGAM. Now I applaud thee; for beyond my thought
Rightly thy words conclude, and worthy thee.

- MEN. For love and for ambition variance oft
Rises 'twixt brothers : but my soul abhors
This mutual harshness of unnatural strife.
- AGAM. But dire necessity compels me now
My daughter's bloody slaughter to complete.
- MEN. Who shall compel thee to destroy thy child?
- AGAM. The whole assembled host of Greece in arms.
- MEN. Not if to Argos her thou send again.
- AGAM. That might be secret : this must be reveal'd.
- MEN. What ? Of the people have not too great dread.
- AGAM. The oracle will Calchas sound to all.
- MEN. Not if e'er that he die : an easy thing.
- AGAM. Vain-glorious is the whole prophetic breed.
- MEN. And of no use when present, of no good.
- AGAM. But seest thou not what enters now my thought ?
- MEN. Can I conjecture what thou dost not speak ?
- AGAM. He of the race of Sisyphus knows all.
- MEN. Nor thee, nor me, will e'er Ulysses harm.
- AGAM. Artful the people, as he wills, he leads.
- MEN. With vanity, a mighty ill, possess'd.
- AGAM. Think then thou seest him stand amidst the troops,
Declaring to them all the oracle
Announc'd by Calchas ; how this sacrifice
I promis'd to Diana, then refus'd.
Soon will he lead the Grecians, and excite them,
Me in their fury having slain, and thee,
To sacrifice the virgin. Should I fly
To Argos, marching thither they will raze
Her rampires by the Cyclops rais'd, and spread
Destruction o'er the land. Unhappy me,
Such ills are mine, to this severe distress
Brought by the gods ! Yet one thing make thy care,
Take heed, as through the host thy steps return,
These tidings reach not Clytemnestra's ear,
Till I the virgin to th' infernal king
Shall have presented, that I may abide

With as few tears as may be my hard fate.
Silence, ye female strangers, be your part.

CHORUS.

STRO. How blest their golden days, who prove
 The gentle joys of temp'rate love,
When modest Venus on the couch attends.
 Pleas'd with tranquillity to dwell !
 But high the madd'ning passions swell,
When both his bows the bright-hair'd tyrant bends ;
 One, by the Graces strung, imparts
 Pure joys that brighten in our hearts ;
 And one, life's wild tumultuous war.
Far, beauteous Queen, from us may this be far ;
 Mine be Love's pure and temp'rate grace,
 The holy flame of chaste desire,
 Mild Venus, in my breast inspire ;
There never have ungovern'd passion place !

ANTIS. Nature in man we diff'ring find,
 And diff'rent manners mark his mind ;
When good, they give each excellence to spring :
 And education's sage control *
 To every virtue forms the soul :
Meek modesty then Wisdom loves to bring,
 She loves to bring each various grace,
 Which shews where Duty hath its place,
 Whence Glory beams divinely bright,
And pours on life unfailing streams of light.
 Virtues in Woman fairest shine,
 That silent guard Love's holy flame ;
 Man's various worth ascends to fame
Most, when t' exalt the state his great design.

EPOD. Thence, Paris, didst thou come,
 Where, on Ida's pastur'd brow
 Train'd the snowy herds among,
 Thine was the barbaric song,
 Thine to bid the sweet notes flow,
 Whilst thy Phrygian pipe breathes measures,

Caught from those harmonious treasures
Which Olympus taught his reed.
Unmilk'd herds around thee feed,
Whilst the contending beauties of the skies
From thee expect the prize.
Hence camest thou to the Grecian shore,
The ivory-cinctur'd house before :
Thy eyes the flames of love inspire,
And Helen, as she gaz'd, receiv'd the fire:
Her charms too rush'd upon thy soul,
And madness reign'd without control.
Hence Discord, Discord, calls to war :
With many a ship, with many a spear
Greece rushes on, impetuous to destroy
The rampir'd walls of Troy.
How splendid are the fortunes of the great !
See, Iphigenia, daughter of the king,
And Clytemnestra, sprung from Tyndarus,
My queen ! From noble ancestors they draw
Their birth, and are to fortune's highest state
Exalted : to th' inferior ranks of life
The pow'rful and the wealthy are as gods.
Daughters of Chalcis, near them let us stand,
And courteous in our hands receive the queen,
As from her car she to the ground descends,
With duteous zeal, that she may tread secure ;
And that th' illustrious daughter of the king
On her arrival nothing may disturb :
For, strangers as we are, let us not cause
These Argive strangers trouble or affright.

CLYTEMNESTRA, IPHIGENIA, ATTENDANTS,
CHORUS.

CLYT. This as a prosp'rous omen I accept,
Thy courtesy and gentleness of speech :

616. For an account of Olympus, the celebrated inventor of the Enharmonic Genus, consult Dr. Burney's History of the Greek Music, p. 360.

And hence conceive I hope that I am come
 To happy nuptials leading her a bride.
 But from the chariot take the dow'ral gifts
 Brought with me for the virgin ; to the house
 Bear them with faithful care. My daughter, quit
 The harness'd chariot, and thy delicate foot
 Place on the ground. Ye females, in your arms
 Receive her ; she is weak ; and from the car
 Conduct her down : stretch one of you your hand,
 Supporting me, that I may leave this seat
 In seemly manner. Some before the yoke
 Stand nigh the horses, for their eye is quick,
 Soon startled, and unruly : now receive
 This child, Orestes, Agamemnon's son,
 For he is yet an infant. Dost thou sleep,
 My son ? The rolling chariot hath subdued thee :
 Wake to thy sister's marriage happily ;
 Th' alliance of a noble youth, thyself
 Noble, shalt thou receive, the godlike son
 Of Thetis. Come my daughter, near me stand,
 Stand near thy mother, Iphigenia, shew
 These strangers how supremely I am blest
 In thee ; and here address thee to thy father.

IPH. Would it offend my mother, should I run
 And throw myself into my father's arms ?

AGAMEMNON, CLYTEMNESTRA, IPHIGENIA,
 CHORUS.

CLYT. Imperial chief of Greece, my honour'd lord,
 To thy commands obedient we are come.

IPH. My father, to thy arms I wish to run,
 Clasp'd to thy bosom ; dear to me thy sight
 After such absence : be not angry with me.

AGAM. Enjoy thy wish : of all my children thou
 Hast of thy father always been most fond.

IPH. Absent so long, with joy I look on thee.

AGAM. And I on thee : so this is mutual joy.

IPH. Well hast thou done to bring me to thy presence.

- AGAM. If well, or not well done, I cannot say.
- IPH. A gloom hangs on thee 'midst thy joy to see me.
- AGAM. A king and chief hath many anxious cares.
- IPH. But let me have thee now : think not of cares.
- AGAM. Thou hast me all : each thought is bent on thee.
- IPH. Smooth then thy brow, and look with fondness on me.
- AGAM. To see thee gives me joy, such joy as mine.
- IPH. Yet from thy melting eye thou pour'st the tear.
- AGAM. Long, very long the absence to ensue.
- IPH. I know not, dearest father, what this means.
- AGAM. Thy prudent speech makes me more pity thee.
- IPH. Might it divert thee, idly will I talk.
- AGAM. Can I be silent ? O, thou hast my thanks.
- IPH. At home, my father, with thy children stay.
- AGAM. I wish it : but, that wish denied, I grieve.
- IPH. A mischief on the war, and Sparta's wrongs !
- AGAM. Others will feel the mischief : I have felt it.
- IPH. How long thy absence in the bay of Aulis !
- AGAM. Something detains me yet, detains the host.
- IPH. Where, father, do they say the Phrygians dwell ?
- AGAM. Where O that Priam's Paris ne'er had liv'd !
- IPH. And when thou leav'st me is the voyage long ?
- AGAM. To the same place thou with thy father goest.
- IPH. O that with honour I might sail with thee !
- AGAM. Thou shalt, where thou thy father shalt remember.
- IPH. Go I alone, or sails my mother with me ?
- AGAM. Alone : nor father there, nor mother goes.
- IPH. Dost thou then place me in some other house ?
- AGAM. Ask not : for virgins should not know these things.
- IPH. Haste to me then from Troy, victorious there.
- AGAM. Here first I must present a sacrifice.
- IPH. Those rites thou with the priests must well prepare.
- AGAM. Thou shalt be witness, nigh the lavers plac'd.
- IPH. Shall we then round the altar raise the song ?
- AGAM. Thee happier than myself in this I deem,
That thou art ignorant. But go thou in,
Present thee to the virgins. O, that kiss,
That dear embrace, how painful from a child,

Who from a father must so long be absent !
 Ah me, that breast, those cheeks, those golden tresses !
 What piercing sorrows hath the Phrygian state
 And Helen caus'd us ! But I check my words ;
 For when I touch thee, in my melting eyes
 The sudden moisture rises : go thou in.—
 Daughter of Leda, if with pity touch'd
 I feel my grief too strong, for that I soon
 Shall to Achilles my dear child consign,
 Forgive me : happy is it so to place
 A daughter, yet it pains a father's heart
 When he delivers to another house
 A child, the object of his tender care.

CLYT. Nor is my heart insensible : I feel,
 Be thou assur'd, an equal grief, nor want
 From thee monitions, when I lead the virgin
 With hymeneal rites ; but custom, join'd
 With time, will check it. Well : his name I know,
 To whom thou hast betroth'd thy daughter ; more
 I wish to know, his lineage whence he draws.

AGAM. Ægina was the daughter of Asopus.

CLYT. With her what mortal wedded, or what god ?

AGAM. Jove, sire of Æacus, CEnone's chief.

CLYT. What son of Æacus possess'd his house ?

AGAM. Peleus : the daughter he of Nereus weds.

CLYT. By force, or by the god's consent obtain'd ?

AGAM. Her father gave her, first by Jove betroth'd.

CLYT. Where did he wed her ? In the ocean waves ?

AGAM. Where Chiron dwells, on Pelion's awful heights.

CLYT. The Centaur race, they say, inhabit there.

AGAM. The gods there present grac'd his nuptial feast.

CLYT. Achilles did the sire, or Thetis train ?

742. CEnone is an island before Attica, afterwards called by Æacus Ægina, in honour of his mother. *Pausan. Corinth. Scholiast on Homer, l. ii.* So Ovid,

Ænopiam Minos petit Æacideia regna.

Ænopiam veteres appellavere : sed ipse

Æacus Æginam genetricis nomine dixit.

Met. l. vii. v. 472.

- AGAM. Chiron, that from bad men he might not learn.
 CLYT. Wise he who took, wise they who gave the charge.
 AGAM. Such is the man, who shall thy daughter wed.
 CLYT. Not disapprov'd: but where in Greece his seat?
 AGAM. Where flows Apidanus through Phthia's bounds.
 CLYT. Thine and my daughter thither will he lead?
 AGAM. When he obtains her, this will be his care.
 CLYT. Blest may they be! But when the bridal day?
 AGAM. Soon as the moon's propitious circle fills.
 CLYT. Is for the bride the previous victim slain?
 AGAM. Soon shall it: this employs my present thought.
 CLYT. And wilt thou next the nuptial feast prepare?
 AGAM. When I have offer'd what the gods require.
 CLYT. Where for the females shall we deck the feast?
 AGAM. Here, where the gallant fleet at anchor rides.
 CLYT. Amply supply then what th' occasion claims.
 AGAM. Know'st thou what now I wish thee do? obey me.
 CLYT. In what? Thou long hast train'd me to obey.
 AGAM. We in the place where now the bridegroom is——
 CLYT. Without the mother! What to me belongs——
 AGAM. Will give thy daughter 'midst th' assembled Greeks.
 CLYT. And where, whilst this is doing, shall I be?
 AGAM. To Argos go, thy charge the virgins there.
 CLYT. And leave my daughter? Who shall raise the torch?
 AGAM. The light, to deck the nuptials, I will hold.
 CLYT. Custom forbids: nor wou'dst thou deem it seemly.
 AGAM. Nor decent that thou mix with martial troops.
 CLYT. But decent that the mother give the daughter.
 AGAM. Nor leave the younger in the house alone.
 CLYT. In close apartments they are guarded well.
 AGAM. Let me persuade thee.
 CLYT. By the potent queen,
 Goddess of Argos, no. Of things abroad
 Take thou the charge: within the house my care
 Shall deck the virgin's nuptials, as is meet. [*She goes in.*]
 AGAM. Unhappy me! In vain I came, my hopes
 Are vanish'd: out of sight it was my wish
 To send my wife: thus I devise, thus form

My wily purpose, studious to beguile
 Those dearest to my soul, in all my aims
 Confounded. Hence to Calchas will I go
 The Seer, inquiring what the goddess wills,
 To me unfortunate, a grief to Greece.
 A wise man in his house should find a wife
 Gentle and courteous, or no wife at all.

CHORUS.

STRO. To Simois, and his silver tide
 In eddies whirling through the plain,
 The fleet of Greece in gallant pride
 Vengeful shall bear this martial train;
 To Ilion's rampir'd tow'rs shall bear,
 And Troy by Phœbus lov'd, the war.
 Cassandra there, when on her soul
 The gods prophetic transports roll,
 Her brows with verdant laurel loves to bind,
 Her yellow tresses streaming to the wind.

ANTIS. The Trojans high on Ilium's tow'rs,
 And round the walls of Troy shall stand,
 When Mars to Simois leads his pow'rs,
 And furious ploughs the hostile strand;
 From Priam's ruin'd house to bear
 Again to Greece the fatal fair,
 Whose brothers, sons of Jove, on high
 Twin stars adorn the spangled sky,
 Rushing to war his brazen shield he rears,
 And glitt'ring round him blaze the Grecian spears.

EPOD. Phrygian Pergamus around,
 Walls of rock with turrets crown'd,
 Mars the furious war shall lead:
 Blood his flaming sword shall stain,
 As from the trunk he hews the warrior's head,
 And to the dust shakes Troy's proud walls again.
 Virgins with their woes oppress,

And Priam's queen their fall lament ;
 Jove-born Helen beats her breast,
 In anguish, from her lover rent.
 From me, from mine be far the fate
 Which Lydia's gorgeous dames with sighs,
 Whilst Troy's sad matrons wipe their dewy eyes,
 In mutual converse o'er the web relate,
 " Who will not rend her crisped hair,
 " Who will not pour the gushing tear,
 " Low sunk in dust our ruin'd walls?
 " Bright daughter of the bird, whose neck
 " Arch'd in proud state the white plumes deck,
 " For thee in dust our country falls:
 " If true the fame that mighty Jove
 " Chang'd to a Swan sought Leda's love:
 " Or fabling poets from Pieria's spring
 " Their wanton and indecent legends bring."

ACHILLES, CHORUS.

ACH. Where is the leader of the Grecian host?
 Who of th' attendants tells him that Achilles,
 The son of Peleus, seeks him at the gate?—
 Different our state, who nigh the Euripus
 Wait here: unwedded some, their houses left
 In solitude, here sit upon the shore;
 And childless others leave their nuptial beds;
 Such ardour, not without the gods, through Greece
 Flames for this war. What touches me, to speak
 Is mine: let others, what their need requires,
 Themselves explain. Thessalia's pleasant fields
 And Peleus leaving, at the narrow surge
 Of Euripus I wait, the Myrmidons
 Restraining; with impatient instance oft
 They urge me, " Why, Achilles, stay we here?
 " What tedious length of time is yet to pass,
 " To Ilium e'er we sail? Wou'dst thou do aught?
 " Do it, or lead us home; nor here await
 " The sons of Atreus, and their cold delays."

CLYTEMNESTRA, ACHILLES, CHORUS.

- CLYT. Son of the goddess Thetis, in the house
Hearing thy words I come without the gates.
- ACH. O revered Modesty, whom do mine eyes
Behold? Her form bears dignity and grace.
- CLYT. Not strange thou know'st us not, before not seen:
But thy regard to Modesty I praise.
- ACH. Who art thou? To the Grecian camp why come,
A woman 'midst an host of men in arms?
- CLYT. Daughter of Leda, Clytemnestra nam'd,
Am I, the royal Agamemnon's wife.
- ACH. Well hast thou answer'd, and in brief: but shame
Were mine with wedded dames to hold discourse.
- CLYT. Stay: wherefore dost thou fly me? With my hand
Join thy right hand, pledge of thy happy nuptials.
- ACH. My hand with thine! To Agamemnon this
Were wrong, if, what I have no right, I touch.
- CLYT. Son of the sea-born Nereid, thou hast right,
Much right, since thou my daughter soon wilt wed.
- ACH. Wed, dost thou say? Amazement chains my tongue:
What secret purpose hath thy strange discourse?
- CLYT. 'Tis ever thus: the modest, 'midst new friends,
At mention of their nuptials are asham'd.
- ACH. Ne'er did I woo thy daughter: ne'er did word

871. Μειρον. v. 831. *Falckenaer, Markland, Musgrave.*

873. We have here a beautiful picture of the chaste reserve of ancient manners. Achilles, under the surprise of seeing a woman, one who had the appearance of dignity, in the camp, and finding her beginning a conversation with him, addresses himself in a fine apostrophe to the goddess Modesty. As soon as he is informed that the lady is the wife of Agamemnon, conscious of the indecorum of holding converse with a wedded dame, he is retiring; she entreats him to stay, and demands his hand, as a pledge of their alliance, which indeed was the only thing that could justify the conduct of Clytemnestra: Achilles, who knew nothing of the pretended nuptials, refuses his hand, as it would be an injury to Agamemnon to touch his wife: such were the refined manners of ancient Greece. The mind, which is not touched with this delicacy, is not of a frame to relish the gracious simplicity of ancient manners and their faithful representer, Euripides. Besides the genuine beauty of this passage, it has a fine effect upon the conduct of the drama, as it tends to shew Clytemnestra that she had been abused, and prepares her for the discovery of Agamemnon's design.

Of nuptials from th' Atridæ reach my ear.

CLYT. What may this mean? Thou wonder'st at my words;
And equal wonder thine excite in me.

ACH. All is conjecture, common to us both,
Both haply are by words alike deceiv'd.

CLYT. I am abused, according nuptials here
Never design'd, it seems: I blush at this.

ACH. Some one perchance 'gainst thee and me hath fram'd
This mock: regard it not; light let it pass.

CLYT. Farewell: I cannot look upon thy face,
Basely abus'd, and made a liar thus.

ACH. Thee too I bid farewell: within the house
Inquiries from thy husband will I make.

ATTENDANT, CLYTEMNESTRA, ACHILLES, CHORUS.

ATT. Stay, stranger of the race of Æacus,
Stay, goddess-born: daughter of Leda, stay.

ACH. Who from the gates calls with this earnest voice?

ATT. A slave: in that I boast not: no proud vaunt
My fortune will admit.

ACH. Whose slave? not mine:
For I with Agamemnon have no share.

ATT. Hers, who stands here before the house, the gift
Of Tyndarus her father.

ACH. Well: we stay:
What wou'dst thou? why hast thou detain'd me? speak.

ATT. Are you alone before this royal house?

ACH. Speak as to us alone: come from the gates.

ATT. O fortune, and my provident caution, save
Those whom I wish to save!

ACH. Thy words portend
Something not brief, and seem of import high.

CLYT. Delay not for my hand: speak what thou wou'dst.

ATT. Dost thou then know me, who I am, to thee
And to thy children how benevolent?

CLYT. I know thee, an old servant of my house.

ATT. And to the royal Agamemnon giv'n

Part of thy dowry.

CLYT. With us didst thou come
To Argos, and hast there been always mine.

ATT. So is it: hence to thee I bear good will,
But to thy husband less.

CLYT. Well then, to me,
Whate'er thy wish to speak, at length disclose.

ATT. Thy daughter will her father slay, her father
With his own hand.

CLYT. How! I abhor thy words,
Old man: thou art not in thy perfect sense.

ATT. Striking her white neck with the ruthless sword.

CLYT. Unhappy me! Hath madness seiz'd his mind?

ATT. No: save to thee and to thy daughter, sound
His sense: in this he errs from reason wide.

CLYT. What cause? What Fury fires him to the deed?

ATT. The Oracles, and Calchas, that the troops
May sail.

CLYT. Sail whither? Wretched me! She too
How wretched, whom her father will destroy!

ATT. To the proud seats of Troy, thence to bring back
Helen, the Spartan's wife.

CLYT. Of her return
Is Iphigenia doom'd the fatal price?

ATT. E'en so: thy daughter will her father slay
A victim to Diana.

CLYT. From my home
To win me were these nuptials then devis'd?

ATT. Thy daughter that with pleasure thou might'st lead
To wed Achilles.

CLYT. To perdition then
Thou com'st, my daughter, and thy mother with thee.

ATT. Piteous of both the suff'rings, and th' attempt
Of Agamemnon dreadful.

CLYT. With my woes
I sink, mine eye no longer holds the tear.

ATT. Painful the tear that falls for children lost.

CLYT. But whence, old man, know'st thou, or heard'st thou this?

ATT. I took my way, charg'd with a letter to thee,
Since that which had been sent.

CLYT. Its purport what?
Forbidding, or exhorting me to bring
My daughter to her death?

ATT. This not to bring her
Gave charge: for wise were then thy husband's thoughts.

CLYT. Charg'd with this letter to me, why to me
Didst thou not give it?

ATT. Menelaus by force
Took it away, the author of these ills.

CLYT. Son of the sea-born Nereid, son of Peleus,
Dost thou hear this?

ACH. What makes thee wretched, lady,
I hear: and ill what touches me I brook.

CLYT. My daughter they will slay, the false pretence
Thy nuptials.

ACH. On thy husband I too charge
Much blame, nor light doth my resentment rise.

CLYT. Low at thy knees I will not blush to fall,
Of mortal birth to one of heav'nly race.
Why should I now be proud? Or what demands,
More than a daughter's life, my anxious care?
Protect, O goddess-born, a wretched mother;
Protect a virgin call'd thy bride: her head
With garlands, ah, in vain! yet did I crown,
And led her as by thee to be espous'd;
Now to be slain I bring her: but on thee,
If thou protect her not, reproach will fall;
For, though not join'd in marriage, thou wast call'd
The husband of the virgin. By this cheek,
By this right hand, by her that gave thee birth;
(For me thy name hath ruin'd, and from thee
I therefore claim protection:) I have now
No altar, but thy knee, to which to fly,
I have no friend, but thee: the fell designs
Of Agamemnon's ruthless heart thou hear'st;
And I, a woman, as thou seest, am come

To this unruly camp, in mischiefs bold,
Of use but when they list. If thou shalt dare
Stretch forth thine hand to aid me, I shall find
Safety: if not, then am I lost indeed.

CHOR. To be a mother is the amplest source
Of nature's dear affections: this to all
Is common, for their children anxious thought.

ACH. To noblest thoughts my tow'ring soul is rais'd,
Which at the woes of others knows to melt,
And bear with moderation fortune's smiles.

CHOR. These are the men, who, train'd in reason's lore,
As wisdom guides them, form their life aright.

ACH. There is a time, when not to build too much
On our own wisdom is agreeable:
But then there is a time, when to exert
Our judgment is of use. By Chiron train'd,
Of mortals the most righteous, I have learn'd
Simplicity of manners. To the sons
Of Atreus, when their high commands are stamp'd
With honour, my obedience shall be paid:
Where honour bids not, I shall not obey:
But my free nature here, and when at Troy,
Preserv'd, my spear shall to my utmost pow'r
Add glory to the war. But thee, oppress'd
With miseries, and by those most dear to thee,
Far as a young man may, so strong I feel
The touch of Pity, thee will I protect;
And never shall thy daughter, who was call'd
Mine, by her father's hand be slain; to weave
His wily trains thy husband ne'er shall make
Me his pretext; for so my name would slay
Thy daughter, though it lifted not the sword.
The cause indeed thy husband; yet not pure
My person, if through me, and through my nuptials,
The virgin perish, suffering dreadful things,
And wrongs, at which astonish'd nature starts.
I were the basest of the Greeks, a thing
Nought worth, (and Menelaus might well be rank'd

'Mongst men;) no more the son of Peleus deem'd,
 But of some cruel demon, should my name,
 Pleaded to screen thy husband's purpose, kill her.
 By Nereus, who beneath the wat'ry waves
 Was train'd, the sire of Thetis, whence my birth,
 The royal Agamemnon shall not touch
 Thy daughter, with his finger shall not touch her,
 Nor e'en her robes: else * Sipylus, a mean
 Barbaric town, from whence our chiefs derive
 Their race, shall be illustrious, and my realm,
 Phthia, be slighted as unknown to fame.
 His lustral lavers, and his salted cakes,
 With sorrow shall the prophet Calchas bear
 Away. The prophet! What is he? a man
 Who speaks 'mongst many falsehoods but few truths,
 Whene'er chance leads him to speak true; when false,
 The prophet is no more. With nuptial rites
 Why should I say how many virgins sue
 To be united to me? But of that
 No more. The royal Agamemnon wrongs me,
 Greatly he wrongs me: ought he not from me,
 Would he betroth his daughter, ask my name?
 Th' assent of Clytemnestra then with ease
 Had I obtain'd to give her daughter to me.
 I to the Greeks had giv'n her, if to Troy
 For this their course were check'd; the public good
 Of those, with whom I join my arms, t' exalt
 I should not have refus'd: but with the chiefs
 I now am nothing, held of no esteem
 To act, or not to act, in glory's cause.
 But soon this sword shall know whom, e'er to Troy
 I come, with drops of blood I shall distain,
 Whoe'er he be that shall attempt to take
 Thy daughter from me: rest thou then in peace;
 I, as a guardian god, am come to thee:
 Great is the contest, yet it shall be prov'd.

* See Pindar's first Olympic Ode, and the Scholiast. Strophe 2.

1050. Μεγιστος ὁ γ' ὄνν, v. 974. Markland.

- CHOR. Worthy, O son of Peleus, of thyself,
Worthy the sea-born goddess, are thy words.
- CLYT. How shall I praise thee, that due bounds my words
Exceed not, nor beneath thy merit sink,
Thy grace impairing: for the good, when prais'd,
Feel something of disgust, if to excess
Commended. But I blush at words, that raise
Pity at private woes, whilst of my ills
No share is thine: yet lovely is the sight,
When, stranger though he be, to the distress'd
A good man gives assistance. Pity me;
My suff'rings call for pity: when I thought
To have thee for a son, I fondly fed
A false and flatt'ring hope. To thee perchance,
And to thy future nuptials, this might be
An omen, should my daughter die; 'gainst this
Behoves thee guard. Well did thy words begin,
And well they ended: be it then thy will,
My daughter shall be sav'd. Wilt thou she fall
A suppliant at thy knees? This ill becomes
A virgin; yet, if such thy will, with all
Her blushes shall she come, and in her eye
Ingenuous modesty: or the same grace
Shall I, if absent she, obtain from thee?
- ACH. Let her remain within: for Modesty
With her own modest dignity is pleas'd.
- CLYT. Yet must we sue to thee with earnest pray'r.
- ACH. Nor bring thy daughter, lady, to our sight,
Nor ours be rude reproach. Th' assembled host,
At leisure from their own domestic cares,
Loves the malignant jest, and sland'rous tale.
Suppliant, or not, alike shall you obtain
From me this grace: the contest shall be mine,
Great as it is, to free you from your ills.
Of one thing be assur'd, ne'er shall my tongue
Utter a falsehood; if I speak untruth,

And mock thee with vain promise, let me die :

But as I save thy daughter may I live.

CLYT. O be thou blest, thus aiding the unhappy !

ACH. Now hear me, how success may best be ours.

CLYT. What wou'dst thou ? my attention thou may'st claim.

ACH. The father's purpose let persuasion change.

CLYT. He, void of spirit, too much fears the host.

ACH. Yet reason o'er the spiritless prevails.

CLYT. Small are my hopes : yet, say, what must I do ?

ACH. First, be a suppliant to him not to slay

His children : if rejected, come to me.

If thy entreaties win him, of my aid

There is no need : thy daughter's life is sav'd,

I with my friend shall be on better terms,

And nought of blame the army to my charge

Can then impute, if I by reason wish

T' effect my purpose, not by violence.

Well to thy warmest wish may this succeed,

And to thy friends', accomplish'd without me.

CLYT. How wise thy words ! whate'er to thee seems right,

Shall be attempted : should I not effect

The things I wish, where shall I see thee next,

Or whither bend my wretched steps to find

Thy hand, my firm protector 'gainst these ills ?

ACH. Far as occasion shall require, myself

Will be thy guard. But with disorder'd step

Let no one see thee hurrying through the throng

Of Grecians, nor disgrace thy father's house :

On Tyndarus unmerited would fall

Aught of ill fame, for he is great in Greece.

CLYT. It shall be so : lead thou ; on thee to wait

Me it behoves. If there are gods, on thee,

Just as thou art, their blessings must attend :

If not, to what effect is all our toil ?

CHORUS.

STRO. What were the strains that Hymen gave to swell,

The Lybian pipe its warbles sweet
 Attempt'ring to the chorded shell,
 That loves to guide the mazy-winding feet,
 Whilst the whisp'ring reed around
 Breathes a soft responsive sound,
 When to the feast of gods on Pelion's brow
 The golden-sandall'd Muses took their way,
 Loose to the gale their beauteous tresses flow,
 Thee, Peleus, gracing, and thy bridal day,
 As they pierce the tangled grove,
 O'er the mountain as they rove,
 Where the Centaur race reside,
 Peleus and his lovely bride
 They hail, and those wild scenes among
 Pour the mellifluous song.
 The Phrygian Ganimede of form divine,
 A royal youth of Dardan race
 Advanc'd the feast of Jove to grace,
 Pour'd from the glowing bowls the sparkling wine.
 Fifty Nymphs the white sands o'er,
 Daughters they of Nereus hoar,
 To the nuptials light advance,
 And weave the circling dance.

ANTIS. The Centaurs waving high their spears of pine,
 Their heads with grassy garlands crown'd,
 Came to the bowls, the feast divine,
 Their hoofs swift-bounding o'er the rattling ground.
 There the Nymphs of Thessaly
 Rais'd their tuneful voices high;
 The prophet Phœbus join'd the solemn strain,
 And Chiron skill'd to trace the Fates' decree,
 " Daughter of Nereus, sung the raptur'd train,
 " A son, bright beam of beauty, shall from thee
 " Draw his birth, who will advance
 " Dreadful with his flaming lance,
 " With his Myrmidons that wield
 " Fierce in fight the spear and shield,
 " To th' illustrious realms of Troy,

“ And her proud tow’rs destroy:
 “ His manly limbs refulgent arms enfold ;
 “ Vulcan, at the mother’s pray’r,
 “ Shall the glorious gift prepare,
 “ And all the hero blaze in burnish’d gold.”

Thus when Peleus won his bride,
 Of the Nereid train the pride,
 Came the gods in bright array
 To grace their nuptial day.

EPOD.

But thee, unhappy maid, thy head
 With flow’ry garlands Greece shall crown ;
 As from the mountain-cave’s cool shade
 Some beauteous heifer coming down,
 Her neck no rude yoke knows, decreed
 A victim at some shrine to bleed.
 But now an human neck must bow,
 And now the virgin’s blood must flow,
 Not train’d the sylvan wilds among
 To rustic pipe, or pastoral song :
 Her the fond mother deck’d with pride
 As to some Grecian chief a bride.
 The lovely form, the beauteous face,
 And modest virtue’s blushing grace
 Avail no more : in evil hour
 Impiety hath seiz’d the pow’r :
 A slighted outcast Virtue fails,
 Injustice o’er the laws prevails :
 The common danger none describes,
 Th’ impending vengeance of the skies.

CLYTEMNESTRA, CHORUS.

CLYT. I am come forth, if haply I may see
 My husband ; long his absence since he left
 The house. In tears is my unhappy daughter,
 And heaves the frequent sigh, since she hath heard
 The death to which her father destines her.
 I spoke of one that is approaching nigh,
 This Agamemnon, who will soon be found

Daring against his children impious deeds.

AGAMEMNON, CLYTEMNESTRA, CHORUS.

AGAM. Daughter of Leda, to my wish I find thee
Before the house, that from my daughter's ear
Apart I may speak words, which ill beseems
A virgin, soon to be a bride, to hear.

CLYT. What is it? Let not the occasion pass.

AGAM. Send now thy daughter to her father's charge
Committed; for the lovers ready stand,
The salted cakes, which o'er the lustral fire
The hand must cast, the heifers too, whose blood
Must in black streams, before the nuptials, flow
To the chaste queen Diana, are prepar'd.

CLYT. Thy words indeed are gracious, but thy deeds
I know not, should I name them, how to praise.
Yet come thou forth, my daughter, for to thee
Are all thy father's purposes well known:
And bring thy brother, bring Orestes, wrapt
Close in thy vests, my child.—See, she is here
In prompt obedience to thee: what for her,
What for myself is meet, that shall I speak.

AGAMEMNON, CLYTEMNESTRA, IPHIGENIA,
CHORUS.

AGAM. Why weeps my daughter? cheerful now no more
Thy look, nor pleasant: wherefore is thine eye
Fix'd on the ground, thy robe before it held?

IPH. Ah me! whence first shall I begin to speak
My ills? for all in ills have found a first,
A last, a middle, and successive train.

AGAM. Why is it that you all are drawn together,
With terror and confusion in your looks?

CLYT. Answer to what I ask with honest truth.

AGAM. Speak freely: to be question'd is my wish.

CLYT. Thine and my daughter art thou bent to slay?

AGAM. Ah, what a question, what suspicion this!

CLYT. To this without evasion answer first.

AGAM. Ask what is meet, thou what is meet shalt hear.

CLYT. I ask this only; to this only speak.

AGAM. O fate! O fortune! O my awful doom!

CLYT. And mine, and hers, one to us wretched three!

AGAM. In what have I done wrong?

CLYT. Canst thou ask this

Of me? Thy purpose is unwise and ill.

AGAM. I am undone: my secrets are betray'd.

CLYT. I have heard all, know all, which thou wou'dst do

Against me: e'en thy silence and thy sighs

Confess it: labour not to give it words.

AGAM. Lo, I am silent: for to misery

I should add shamelessness by speaking false.

CLYT. Now hear me; for my thoughts will I unfold

In no obscure and colour'd mode of speech.

First then, for first with this will I upbraid thee,

Me didst thou wed against my will, and seize

By force: my former husband Tantalus

By thee was slain; by thee my infant son,

Torn from my breast by violence, was whirl'd

And dash'd against the ground: the sons of Jove,

My brothers, glitt'ring on their steeds in arms

Advanc'd against thee: but old Tyndarus,

My father, sav'd thee, at his knees become

A suppliant; and hence didst thou obtain

My bed: to thee and to thy house my thoughts

Thus reconcil'd, thou shalt thyself attest

How irreproachable a wife I was,

How chaste, with what attention I increas'd

The splendor of thy house, that ent'ring there

Thou hadst delight, and going out, with thee

Went happiness along. A wife like this

Is a rare prize; the worthless are not rare.

Three daughters have I borne thee, and this son,

Of one of these wilt thou, O piercing grief!

1245. Pausanias, Corinthiac. slightly mentions this history, and takes notice of the tomb of Tantalus, but from traditional report only; neither is he able to determine whether this Tantalus was the son of Thyestes or of Bronteus.

Deprive me: should one ask thee, for what cause
Thy daughter wilt thou kill? what wou'dst thou say?
Speak; or I must speak for thee! E'en for this,
That Menelaus may regain Helena.
Well would it be, if, for his wanton wife
Our children made the price, what most we hate
With what is dearest to us we redeem.
But if thou lead the forces, leaving me
At Argos, should thy absence then be long,
Think what my heart must feel, when in the house
I see the seats all vacant of my child,
And her apartment vacant: I shall sit
Alone, in tears, thus ever wailing her,
“Thy father, O my child, hath slain thee; he,
“That gave thee birth, hath kill'd thee, not another,
“Nor by another hand; this is the prize
“He left his house.” But do not, by the gods,
Do not compel me to be aught but good
To thee, nor be thou aught but good to me:
Since there will want a slight pretence alone
For me, and for my daughters left at home,
To welcome, as becomes us, thy return.
Well: thou wilt sacrifice thy child: what vows
Wilt thou then form? what blessing wilt thou ask
To wait thee, thou, who dost thy daughter slay,
Thou, who with shame to this unlucky war
Art marching? Is it just that I should pray
For aught of good to thee? Should I not deem
The gods unwise, if they their favours show'r
On those who stain their willing hands with blood?
Wilt thou, to Argos when return'd, embrace
Thy children? But thou hast no right: thy face
Which of thy children will behold, if one
With cool deliberate purpose thou shalt kill?
Now to this point I come: if thee alone
To bear the sceptre, thee to lead the troops
Th' occasion call'd, shou'dst thou not thus have urg'd
Thy just appeal to Greece, “Is it your will,

“ Ye Grecians, to the Phrygian shores to sail?
 “ Cast then the lot whose daughter must be slain.”
 This had at least been equal; nor hadst thou
 Been singled out from all to give thy child
 A victim for the Greeks. Or Menelaus,
 Whose cause this is, should for the mother slay
 Hermione: but I, who to thy bed
 Am faithful, of my child shall be depriv'd,
 And she, that hath misdane, at her return
 To Sparta her young daughter shall bear back,
 And thus be happy. Aught if I have said
 Amiss, reply to that: but if my words
 Speak nought but sober reason, do not slay
 Thy child, and mine: and thus thou wilt be wise.

CHOR. Be thou persuaded: reason bids preserve
 Our children: this no mortal can gainsay.

IPH. Had I, my father, the persuasive voice
 Of Orpheus, and his skill to charm the rocks
 To follow me, and sooth whome'er I please
 With winning words, I would make trial of it:
 But I have nothing to present thee now
 Save tears, my only eloquence: and those
 I can present thee. On thy knees I hang,
 A suppliant wreath, this body, which she bore
 To thee. Ah! kill me not in youth's fresh prime.
 Sweet is the light of heav'n: compel me not
 What is beneath to view. I was the first
 To call thee father, me thou first didst call
 Thy child: I was the first that on thy knees
 Fondly caress'd thee, and from thee receiv'd
 The fond caress: this was thy speech to me,

1310. Menelaus, before he sailed to Troy, brought his daughter Hermione from Sparta to Argos, and left her there under the care of Clytemnestra. See Orestes, l. 69. This justifies the word *ὑπόστροφον*, v. 1204.

1318. When Orpheus tun'd his pipe with pleasing woe,
 Rivers forgot to run, and Winds to blow;
 While list'ning Forests cover'd, as he play'd,
 The soft Musician in a moving shade.

Addison's Prologue to the British Enchanters.

Shall I, my child, e'er see thee in some house
Of splendor, happy in thy husband, live,
And flourish, as becomes my dignity?
My speech to thee was, leaning 'gainst thy cheek,
Which with my hand I now caress, And what
Shall I then do for thee? shall I receive
My father when grown old, and in my house
Cheer him with each fond office, to repay
The careful nurture which he gave my youth?
These words are on my memory deep impress'd,
Thou hast forgot them, and wilt kill thy child.
By Pelops I entreat thee, by thy sire
Atreus, by this my mother, who before
Suffer'd for me the pangs of childbirth, now
These pangs again to suffer, do not kill me.
If Paris be enamour'd of his bride,
His Helen, what concerns it me? and how
Comes he to my destruction? Look upon me,
Give me a smile, give me a kiss, my father,
That, if my words persuade thee not, in death
I may have this memorial of thy love.
My brother, small assistance canst thou give
Thy friends, yet for thy sister with thy tears
Implore thy father that she may not die:
E'en infants have a sense of ills: and see,
My father, silent though he be, he sues
To thee: be gentle to me, on my life
Have pity: thy two children by this beard
Entreat thee, thy dear children: one is yet
An infant, one to riper years arriv'd.
I will sum all in this, which shall contain
More than long speech; to view the light of life
To mortals is most sweet, but all beneath
Is nothing: of his senses is he reft,
Who hath a wish to die; for life, though ill,
Excels whate'er there is of good in death.

CHOR. For thee, unhappy Helen, and thy love
A contest dreadful, and surcharg'd with woes,

To the Atridæ and their children comes.

AGAM. What calls for pity, and what not, I know :
 I love my children, else I should be void
 Of reason: to dare this is dreadful to me,
 And not to dare is dreadful. I perforce
 Must do it. What a naval camp is here
 You see, how many kings of Greece array'd
 In glitt'ring arms: to Ilium's tow'rs are these
 Denied t' advance, unless I offer thee
 A victim, thus the prophet Calchas speaks,
 Denied from her foundations to o'erturn
 Illustrious Troy; and through the Grecian host
 Maddens the fierce desire to sail with speed
 'Gainst the barbarians' land, and check their rage
 For Grecian dames: my daughters these will slay
 At Argos, you too will they slay, and me,
 Should I, the goddess not revering, make
 Of none effect her oracle. To this
 Not Menelaus, my child, hath wrought my soul,
 Nor to his will am I a slave; but Greece,
 For which, will I, or will I not, perforce
 Thee I must sacrifice: my weakness here
 I feel, and must submit. In thee, my child,
 What lies, and what in me, Greece should be free,
 Nor should her sons beneath Barbarians bend,
 Their nuptial beds to ruffian force a prey.

CLYTEMNESTRA, IPHIGENIA, CHORUS.

CLYT. Alas, my child! O strangers! Wretched me,
 How wretched in thy death! Thy father flies thee,
 He flies, but dooms thee to the realms beneath.

IPH. My mother, O my mother! Wretched me!
 For both our fortunes, full of woe,
 One strain, one mournful strain shall flow.
 No more the gladsome light of day,
 No more the bright sun's golden ray
 Shall shine, ah me! to cheer my child.
 Ah me! Ye Phrygian forests wild,

Ye snow-clad mountains, rude that rise,
Mountains of Ida to the skies;
Where Priam once his son unblest,
Far sever'd from his mother's breast,
Expos'd, this Paris to destroy;
Idæus thence they call'd the boy;
The boy they call'd Idæus, known
So nam'd through all the Phrygian town.
O that his son he ne'er had laid
Where with their herds the herdsmen stray'd,
The fountains of the nymphs among,
Where roll the lucid streams along,
And the green mead profusely pours
The blushing glow of roseate flow'rs,
With Hyacinths of dusky hue,
For goddesses which lovely grew.
Once Pallas came to those sweet glades,
And Juno deign'd to grace their shades,
And Venus fraught with wanton wiles,
Resistless with enchanting smiles,
And Hermes, messenger of Jove.
Venus in all the sweets of love
Rejoicing, Pallas in her spear,
And proud the bed of Jove to share,
Juno's bright form, imperial dame,
Once to the odious judgment came:
For beauty and for beauty's prize
This contest drew them from the skies,
But death on me: yet Grece shall own
My death assures her high renown.

HOR. Diana hath accepted thee the first
Of victims, that our arms may sail to Troy.

PH. But he, to whom my birth I owe,
Betrays and flies me 'midst my woe.
My mother! Ah my cruel fate!
He flies, and leaves me desolate.
Ill-omen'd Helena, thy love

Fatal, will fatal to me prove:
 I die, I perish, I am slain,
 My blood th' unhallow'd sword shall stain;
 Unhallow'd is my father's hand,
 That pours it on th' empurpled sand.
 O, had the ships ne'er plough'd their way
 To Aulis, to this winding bay!
 O, had Jove giv'n the fleet to bear
 To Troy's proud shores the wasted war;
 Not adverse winds, that sullen sweep
 Across Eubœa's angry deep!
 To some he grants the fav'ring gales
 That wanton in their flying sails;
 Necessity to some and pain;
 To some to cut the azure main;
 These quit the port with gallant pride,
 Reluctant those at anchor ride.
 To suff'rings born the human race
 In suff'rings pass life's little space:
 Why since misfortunes 'round them wait,
 Should men invite their cruel fate?

CHOR. Alas, what woes, what miseries hast thou brought,
 Daughter of Tyndarus, on Greece! But thee,
 Unhappy virgin, by this flood of ills
 O'erwhelm'd I wail: Ah, were this fate not thine!

IPH. My mother, what a crowd of men I see
 Advance!

CLYT. The son of Thetis with them comes,
 For whom, my child, I led thee to this strand.

IPH. Open the doors to me, ye female train,
 That I may hide myself.

CLYT. Whom dost thou fly?

IPH. Achilles, whom I blush to see.

CLYT. And why?

IPH. These ill-starr'd nuptials cover me with shame.

CLYT. Nothing of pleasure doth thy state present.
 Yet stay: this is no time for grave reserve.

ACHILLES, CLYTEMNESTRA, IPHIGENIA,
CHORUS.

ACH. Daughter of Leda, O unhappy queen !

CLYT. Thy voice speaks nothing false.

ACH. Among the Greeks

Dreadful the clamour.

CLYT. What the clamour? say.

ACH. Touching thy daughter.

CLYT. Thou hast said what bears

No happy omen.

ACH. That she must be slain

A victim.

CLYT. And doth none against this speak?

ACH. I was with outrage threaten'd.

CLYT. Stranger, how?

ACH. To be o'erwhelm'd with stones.

CLYT. Whilst thou wou'dst save

My child?

ACH. E'en so.

CLYT. Who dar'd to touch thee?

ACH. All

The Grecians.

CLYT. Were thy troops of Myrmidons

Not present to thee?

ACH. They were first in rage.

CLYT. Then are we lost, my child.

ACH. They cried aloud

That I was vanquish'd by a woman.

CLYT. Aught

Didst thou reply?

ACH. That her, who was to be

My bride, they should not slay.

CLYT. With justice urg'd.

ACH. Nam'd by her father mine.

CLYT. From Argos brought

By his command.

ACH. In vain: I was o'erpow'r'd

By their rude cries.

Thou art not by the army charg'd with blame,
Nothing the more should we avail, on him
Mischief would fall. Hear then what to my mind
Deliberate thought presents: it is decreed
For me to die: this then I wish, to die
With glory, all reluctance banish'd far.
My mother, weigh this well, that what I speak
Is honour's dictate: all the pow'rs of Greece
Have now their eyes on me; on me depends
The sailing of the fleet, the fall of Troy,
And not to suffer, should a new attempt
Be dar'd, the rude Barbarians from blest Greece
To bear in future times her dames by force,
This ruin bursting on them for the loss
Of Helena, whom Paris bore away.
By dying all these things shall I achieve,
And blest, for that I have deliver'd Greece,
Shall be my fame. To be too fond of life
Becomes not me; nor for thyself alone,
But to all Greece a blessing didst thou bear me.
Shall thousands, when their country's injur'd, lift
Their shields, shall thousands grasp the oar, and dare,
Advancing bravely 'gainst the foes, to die
For Greece? And shall my life, my single life,
Obstruct all this? Would this be just? What word
Can we reply? Nay more; it is not right
That he with all the Grecians should contend
In fight, should die, and for a woman: No:
More than a thousand women is one man
Worthy to see the light of life. If me
The chaste Diana wills t' accept, shall I,
A mortal, dare oppose her heav'nly will?
Vain the attempt: for Greece I give my life.
Slay me, demolish Troy: for these shall be
Long time my monuments, my children these,
My nuptials, and my glory. It is meet
That Greece should o'er Barbarians bear the sway,
Not that Barbarians lord it over Greece:

Nature hath form'd them slaves, the Grecians free.

CHOR. Thine, royal virgin, is a generous part:
But harsh what Fortune and the Goddess wills.

ACH. Daughter of Agamemnon, highly blest
Some god would make me, if I might attain
Thy nuptials. Greece in thee I happy deem,
And thee in Greece. This hast thou nobly spoken,
And worthy of thy country: to contend
Against a goddess of superior pow'r
Desisting, thou hast judg'd the public good
A better, nay a necessary part.
For this more ardent my desire to gain thee
My bride, this disposition when I see,
For it is generous. But consider well:
To do thee good, to lead thee to my house,
Is my warm wish; and much I should be griev'd,
Be witness Thetis, if I save thee not
In arms against the Grecians: in thy thought
Revolve this well: death is a dreadful thing.

IPH. Reflecting not on any this I speak,
Enough of wars and slaughters from the charms
Of Helen rise: but die not thou for me,
O stranger, nor distain thy sword with blood;
But let me save my country, if I may.

ACH. O glorious spirit! nought have I 'gainst this
To urge, since such thy will; for what thou say'st
Is generous: why should not the truth be spoken?
But of thy purpose thou may'st yet repent.
Know then my resolution: I will go,
And nigh the altar place these arms, thy death
Preventing, not permitting: thou perchance

1555. This sentiment must be admired as noble and even heroic from this young princess in her present situation; a love of her country even to enthusiasm was necessary to support the elevation of her soul: but when the same plea is coolly urged by the Philosopher, it becomes an important error in morals. See this argument considered and refuted by that generous assertor of Truth and of man's natural and universal right to Liberty, Dr. Beattie, in his *Essay on Truth*, 4to. p. 309, &c.

May'st soon approve my purpose, nigh thy throat
 When thou shalt see the sword: and for that cause
 I will not, for a rash unweigh'd resolve,
 Abandon thee to die; but with these arms
 Wait near Diana's temple till thou come.

CLYTEMNESTRA, IPHIGENIA, CHORUS.

- IPH. Why, mother, dost thou shed these silent tears?
 CLYT. I have a cruel cause, that rends my heart.
 IPH. Forbear, nor sink my spirit. Grant me this.
 CLYT. Say what: by me my child shall ne'er be wrong'd.
 IPH. Clip not those crisped tresses from thine head,
 Nor robe thee in the sable garb of woe.
 CLYT. What hast thou said, my child? When thou art lost—
 IPH. Not lost, but sav'd: through me thou shalt be fam'd.
 CLYT. What, for thy death shall I not mourn, my child?
 IPH. No, since for me a tomb shall not be rais'd.
 CLYT. To die then, is not that to be entomb'd?
 IPH. The altar of the goddess is my tomb.
 CLYT. Well dost thou speak, my child: I will comply.
 IPH. And deem me blest, as working good to Greece.
 CLYT. What message to thy sisters shall I bear?
 IPH. Them too array not in the garbs of woe.
 CLYT. What greetings to the virgins dost thou send?
 IPH. My last farewell. To manhood train Orestes.
 CLYT. Embrace him, for thou ne'er shalt see him more.
 IPH. Faras thou cou'dst, thou didst assist thy friends. [*to Orestes.*
 CLYT. At Argos can I do aught pleasing to thee?
 IPH. My father, and thy husband, do not hate.
 CLYT. For thy dear sake fierce contests must he bear.
 IPH. For Greece, reluctant, me to death he yields.
 CLYT. Basely, with guile, unworthy Atreus' son.
 IPH. Who goes with me, and leads me, by the hair
 E'er I am dragg'd?
 CLYT. I will go with thee.
 IPH. No:
 That were unseemly.

CLYT. Hanging on thy robes.

IPH. Let me prevail, my mother; stay : to me
 As more becoming this, and more to thee.
 Let one of these, th' attendants of my father,
 Conduct me to Diana's hallow'd mead,
 Where I shall fall a victim.

CLYT. O my child,
 Dost thou then go?

IPH. And never to return.

CLYT. And wilt thou leave thy mother?

IPH. As thou seest,
 Not as I merit.

CLYT. Stay, forsake me not.

IPH. I suffer not a tear to fall. But you,
 Ye virgins, to my fate attune the hymn,
 " Diana, daughter of almighty Jove."
 With fav'ring omens sing " Success to Greece."
 Come, with the basket one begin the rites,
 One with the purifying cakes the flames
 Enkindle; let my father his right hand
 Place on the altar; for I come to give
 Safety to Greece, and conquest to her arms.

IPH. Lead me: mine the glorious fate
 To o'erturn the Phrygian state;
 Ilium's tow'rs their head shall bow.
 With the garlands bind my brow,
 Bring them, be these tresses crown'd.
 Round the shrine, the altar round
 Bear the lavers, which you fill
 From the pure translucent rill.
 High your choral voices raise,
 Tun'd to hymn Diana's praise,
 Blest Diana, royal maid.
 Since the fates demand my aid,
 I fulfil their awful pow'r
 By my slaughter, by my gore.

CHOR. Reverenc'd, reverenc'd mother, now

Thus for thee our tears shall flow :
 For unhallow'd would a tear
 'Midst the solemn rites appear.

IPH. Swell the notes, ye virgin train,
 To Diana swell the strain,
 Queen of Chalcis, adverse land,
 Queen of Aulis, on whose strand,
 Winding to a narrow bay,
 Fierce to take its angry way
 Waits the war, and calls on me
 Its retarded force to free.

O my country, where these eyes
 Open'd on Pelasgic skies !
 O ye virgins, once my pride,
 In Mycenæ who reside !

CHOR. Why of Perseus name the town,
 Which Cyclopean rampires crown ?

IPH. Me you rear'd a beam of light :
 Freely now I sink in night.

CHOR. And for this immortal fame,
 Virgin, shall attend thy name.

IPH. Ah, thou beaming lamp of day,
 Jove-born, bright, ethereal ray,
 Other regions me await,
 Other life, and other fate !

Farewell, beauteous lamp of day,
 Farewell, bright ethereal ray !

CHOR. See, she goes : her glorious fate
 To o'erturn the Phrygian state :
 Soon the wreaths shall bind her brow ;
 Soon the lustral waters flow ;
 Soon that beauteous neck shall feel
 Piercing deep the fatal steel,
 And the ruthless altar o'er
 Sprinkle drops of gushing gore.

1652. All mourning was forbidden amidst the sacrifices to the gods. See the Supplicants of Euripides, l. 327. n.

1685. 'Παῖς' v. 1516. *Markland.*

By thy father's dread command
 There the cleansiug lavers stand;
 There in arms the Grecian pow'rs
 Burn to march 'gainst Ilium's tow'rs.
 But our voices let us raise,
 Tun'd to hymn Diana's praise,
 Virgin daughter she of Jove,
 Queen among the gods above.
 That with conquest and renown
 She the arms of Greece may crown.
 To thee, dread pow'r, we make our vows,
 Pleas'd when the blood of human victims flows.
 To Phrygia's hostile strand,
 Where rise perfidious Ilium's hated tow'rs,
 Waft, O waft the Grecian pow'rs,
 And aid this martial band!
 On Agamemnon's honour'd head,
 Whilst wide the spears of Greece their terrors spread,
 Th' immortal crown let conquest place,
 With glory's brightest grace.

MESSANGER, CLYTEMNESTRA, CHORUS.

- MESS. O royal Clytemnestra, from the house
 Hither advance, that thou may'st hear my words.
 CLYT. Hearing thy voice I come, but with affright
 And terror trembling, lest thy coming bring
 Tidings of other woes, beyond what now
 Afflict me.
 MESS. Of thy daughter have I things
 Astonishing and awful to relate.
 CLYT. Delay not then, but speak them instantly.
 MESS. Yes, honour'd lady, thou shalt hear them all
 Distinct from first to last, if that my sense
 Disorder'd be not faithless to my tongue.
 When to Diana's grove and flow'ry meads
 We came, where stood th' assembled host of Greece,
 Leading thy daughter, straight in close array
 Was form'd the band of Argives: but the chief

Imperial Agamemnon, when he saw
His daughter as a victim to the grove
Advancing, groan'd, and bursting into tears
Turn'd from the sight his head, before his eyes
Holding his robe. The virgin near him stood,
And thus address'd him, "Father, I to thee
"Am present: for my country, and for all
"The land of Greece, I freely give myself
"A victim: to the altar let them lead me,
"Since such the oracle. If aught on me
"Depends, be happy, and attain the prize
"Of glorious conquest, and revisit safe
"Your country: of the Grecians for this cause
"Let no one touch me; with intrepid spirit
"Silent will I present my neck." She spoke,
And all that heard admir'd the noble soul
And virtue of the virgin. In the midst
Talthybius standing, such his charge, proclaim'd
Silence to all the host: and Calchas now,
The prophet, in the golden basket plac'd
Drawn from its sheath the sharp-edg'd sword, and bound
The sacred garlands round the virgin's head.
The son of Peleus, holding in his hands
The basket and the laver, circled round
The altar of the goddess, and thus spoke,
"Daughter of Jove, Diana, in the chase
"Of savage beasts delighting, through the night
"Who rollest thy resplendent orb, accept
"This victim, which th' associate troops of Greece,
"And Agamemnon, our imperial chief,
"Present to thee, the unpolluted blood
"Now from this beauteous virgin's neck to flow.
"Grant that secure our fleets may plough the main,
"And that our arms may lay the rampir'd walls
"Of Troy in dust." The sons of Atreus stood,
And all the host, fix'd on the ground their eyes.
The priest then took the sword, preferr'd his pray'r,
And with his eye mark'd where to give the blow.

My heart with grief sunk in me, on the earth
Mine eyes were cast; when sudden to the view
A wonder; for the stroke each clearly heard,
But where the virgin was none knew: aloud
The priest exclaims, and all the host with shouts
Rifted the air, beholding from some god
A prodigy, which struck their wond'ring eyes,
Surpassing faith when seen: for on the ground
Panting was laid an hind of largest bulk,
In form excelling; with its spouting blood
Much was the altar of the goddess dew'd.
Calchas at this, think with what joy, exclaim'd,
"Ye leaders of th' united host of Greece,
"See you this victim, by the goddess brought,
"And at her altar laid, a mountain hind?
"This, rather than the virgin, she accepts,
"Not with the rich stream of her noble blood
"To stain the altar; this she hath receiv'd
"Of her free grace, and gives a fav'ring gale
"To swell our sails, and bear th' invading war
"To Ilium: therefore rouse, ye naval train,
"Your courage; to your ships; for we this day,
"Leaving the deep recesses of this shore,
"Must pass th' Ægean sea." Soon as the flames
The victim had consum'd, he pour'd a pray'r,
That o'er the waves the host might plough their way.
Me Agamemnon sends, that I should bear
To thee these tidings, and declare what fate
The gods assign him, and through Greece t' obtain
Immortal glory. What I now relate
I saw, for I was present: to the gods
Thy daughter, be thou well assur'd, is fled.
Therefore lament no more, no more retain
Thy anger 'gainst thy lord: to mortal men
Things unexpected oft the gods dispense,
And whom they love they save: this day hath seen
Thy daughter dead, seen her alive again.

CHOR. His tidings with what transport do I hear!

Thy daughter lives, and lives among the gods.

CLYT. And have the gods, my daughter, borne thee hence?
How then shall I address thee? Or of this
How deem? Vain words, perchance, to comfort me,
And sooth to peace the anguish of my soul.

MESS. But Agamemnon comes, and will confirm
Each circumstance which thou hast heard from me.

AGAM. Lady, we have much cause to think ourselves,
Touching our daughter, blest: for 'mongst the gods
Commercing she in truth resides. But thee
Behoves it with thine infant son return
To Argos, for the troops with ardour haste
To sail. And now farewell: my greetings to thee
From Troy will be unfrequent, and at times
Of distant interval: may'st thou be blest!

CHOR. With joy, Atrides, reach the Phrygian shore;
With joy return to Greece, and bring with thee
Bright conquest, and the glorious spoils of Troy!

R H E S U S.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

HECTOR

ÆNEAS

DOLON

SHEPHERD

RHESUS

ULYSSES

DIOMEDE

MINERVA

PARIS

CHARIOTEER OF RHESUS

THE MUSE TERPSICHORE

CHORUS, CONSISTING OF THE GUARDS.

R H E S U S.

THE subject of this drama is taken from the tenth Iliad, in which Diomede and Ulysses undertake in the night to explore the Trojan camp. They meet Dolon, who was sent by Hector on the like dangerous adventure to learn the designs of the Grecians : from him they receive information that Rhesus was just arrived to the aid of Troy, and encamped separately ; they penetrate to the Thracian's tent, kill him, and lead away his celebrated horses. Beautiful as this Episode is in the Epic poem, where the more still night scene forms an agreeable shade between the glowing colours of the battles that precede and follow, it does not promise as a tragedy to affect the heart much with either terror or pity. Some critics find so little of the usual tenderness of Euripides in it, that they have assigned it to some other author ; but this is unauthorized conjecture. The story is indeed simple, but the Poet has made the best use of it : the dialogue is justly maintained, and the narrative animated ; the characters of Hector and Rhesus are admirably drawn, alike open, generous, and brave ; Hector is confident, Rhesus vaunting, and not without reason, as Minerva describes his strength and valour : Barbaric manners are finely exhibited. As to the pathetic, ye parents, who, like me, have lately lost a child, the ornament and delight of your age, can you

without a tear read the lamentations of Terpsichore over her son? particularly these lines,

Ye pangs that rend a parent's heart, of ills
To mortals the severest, he, who deems
Rightly of you, will childless pass through life,
Nor shed a parent's tear on a child's tomb!

The Scene is in the Trojan camp, before the tent of Hector.

R H E S U S.

- CHOR. **GO** to the couch of Hector, one that lifts,
Sleepless, the pond'rous shield to guard the chief;
If haply he will hear what the arm'd youths,
Who in their course of the four watches hold
Their nightly post before the troops of Troy,
Have to relate.—Ho, Hector! ope thine eye,
That glows with martial terrors; leave thy bed
Of leaves low strew'd: the time demands thine ear.
- HEC.CH. Who's this? art thou a friend? who art thou? speak.
What means this clamour? Who at this late hour
Of night approach my couch? You must declare.
- CHOR. The out-guards of the camp.
- HECT. What dost thou bring
With all this tumult?
- CHOR. Be thy courage, Prince,
Not sunk.
- HECT. My courage sinks not: is there form'd
Some wile of war amid the night?
- CHOR. Nor yet.
- HECT. Why then, thy station quitting, dost thou raise
This uproar in the camp, if thou hast nought
At this late hour to tell? Dost thou not know
That nigh the Grecian host in th' open field
This night in all our arms we take repose?
- CHOR. Arm thy confederates, Hector; to their tents
Go round; excite them now to grasp the spear;
Rouse them from sleep; to thine own band dispatch
Thy friends; for instant battle rein your steeds.

Who to Euphorbus goes? who to the chief,
 * Sprung from Europa, that the Lycians leads? • Sarpedon.
 Where are th' inspectors of the victims? where
 The leaders of the light-arm'd infantry?

And where the Phrygian archers? To your bows,
 Headed with horn, bind well the twanging strings.

HECT. One while thou utterest what to hear is cause
 Of terror; one while wou'dst my courage raise;
 Nothing explain'd distinct: the waving scourge
 Of Jove-sprung Pan hath struck thee with affright;
 Thy station left, hence dost thou fill the camp
 With tumult. Whence thy clamours? What of new
 Hast thou to speak? For, many though thy words,
 Nothing distinct hath thy relation shewn.

CHOR. Hector, the Grecian army kindles fires
 Through all the night: the stations of the ships
 With torches blaze: to Agamemnon's tent
 E'en at this hour of darkness all the troops
 Tumultuous crowd, their expectations rais'd
 By some fresh rumour. Never, till this night,
 Reign'd such confusion in the naval camp.
 Mistrusting what may be th' event, to thee
 This to relate I come, lest haply blame
 From thee for our neglect may light on us.

HECT. Well art thou come, e'en were thy tidings fraught
 With terror: but these men, t' escape mine eye,
 Run darkling to their oars, and from this land
 Prepare their flight. These night-enkindled fires
 Are to my soul most pleasing. O thou god,
 Whoe'er thou art, that thou shou'dst check my course
 Of glory, like a lion of his prey
 Despoil'd, e'er all this Argive host my spear
 Had utterly destroy'd! Had not the rays
 Of the bright sun declining check'd my arms,
 My vict'ry had I urg'd, till I had fir'd
 Their ships, and rush'd through their affrighted tents
 Slaughtering the Grecians with this blood-stain'd hand.
 Nay, I was ardent through the night to urge

The works of war, the god's successful force
 Employing; but the wise, and they who know
 The will of heav'n, the seers, advis'd me wait
 The morn's returning light, then on the strand
 Not leave a Grecian: but the Grecians wait not
 The counsels of my seers: a flying slave
 Feels his force active in the shades of night.
 But to the troops quick must I give command
 To snatch their ready arms, to rouse from sleep,
 That some of them, as to their ships they spring,
 Mark'd on the back may dew th' ascent with blood,
 And some, the captives of the spear, in chains
 May learn to labour in the Phrygian fields.

CHOR. Hector, thy warmth impels thee, e'er inform'd
 Of what is doing: if the men prepare
 For flight, or not, we know not certainly.

HECT. On what pretext these fires then through their camp?

CHOR. I know not: but my mind mistrusts them much.

HECT. If thou fear'st this, thou may'st fear every thing.

CHOR. Such fires the foes ne'er kindled till this night.

HECT. Nor ever in the rout so basely fell.

CHOR. This was thy deed: the rest be now thy charge.

HECT. The charge 'gainst foes is simple, Arm thy hand.

CHOR. But, see, with hasty step Æneas comes,
 Something he bears of import to his friends.

ÆNEAS, HECTOR, CHORUS.

ÆN. Whence is it, Hector, that the watch of night
 Come to thy tent; and what at this late hour
 Of terror bring they, which disturbs the camp?

HECT. Æneas, gird thy martial arms around thee.

ÆN. What cause? Report they ought of secret guile
 Form'd by the foes amidst the shades of night?

HECT. They fly, the Grecians fly, they climb their ships.

ÆN. What hast thou as undoubted proof of this?

HECT. Through all the night they kindle fires, nor wait,
 I ween, the morn: the stations of their ships
 With torches blaze, and to their homes in haste,

Leaving this land, they hoist their sails for flight.

ÆN. With what intent arm'st thou for this thy hand !

HECT. Them, as they fly, and leap into their ships,
I with my spear will check, and press on them
With dreadful vengeance. Shame it were to us,
And to the shame an hurt, should we permit,
Thus favour'd by the god, the foes to fly,
Who wrought us all these mischiefs, unattack'd.

ÆN. O that in counsel thou wert wise, as great
In arms ! But nature to no mortal grants
Knowledge of all things, but to each assigns
His diff'rent part ; to thee to fight, to some
Deliberate prudence. Thou hast heard of fires
Wide blazing through yon camp, and in the thought
Exulting that the Grecians fly, wou'dst lead
Thy troops, and in the settled gloom of night
The trenches pass. But shou'dst thou find the foe
Not flying from this land, but dauntless fix'd
To face thy spear, subdued thou wilt not find
Easy return to Troy : for in the rout
How shall thy troops the rampir'd trenches pass ?
Or how thy chariots o'er th' encumber'd bridge,
Their spokes, their axles crash'd, regain the field ?
But shou'dst thou conquer, sternly watchful stands
The son of Peleus : ne'er will he permit
Thee 'gainst the ships to toss the flaming brands,
Nor spread such havoc through the Grecian host ;
For he is fiery-fierce, and his arm'd hand
Resistless. From their martial toils awhile
Permit me then the troops, beside their shields
Reclin'd, to rest : my counsel is to send
One, whom his courage prompts, t' explore what now
The foes intend : if speedy flight, with speed
Let us advance, and rush upon this host
Of Argives : if to aught of secret wile
These watch-fires lead, the purpose of the foe
Discover'd, strait to council let us call
Th' assembled chiefs. Thou hast what I advise.

CHOR. Th' advice seems good: change then thy purpose, Prince,
And thus resolve: a chief's commands unsafe
And rash I praise not: what can be devis'd
More wise, than of our swiftest youths that one
Advent'ring near a bold discovery make
What the foe meditates, what mean these fires
That blaze before their adverse-station'd prow's?

HECT. Well: since this pleases all, obtain your will.
Go thou, and still thy social bands, for soon
The camp may be in motion, having heard
These nightly counsels. I will send t' explore
The purpose of the foe; if aught of wile
We learn, thou shalt hear all, and, present, know
What is resolv'd: but if for hasty flight
They spread their sails, let thy attention wake,
Expect the trumpet's blast; for be assur'd
I shall not linger, but this night be found
Amidst the thickest of the Grecian host,
Where their descending vessels plough the strand.

ÆN. Send then with speed, for now discretion guides
Thy thought: and when th' occasion calls me forth
To action, thou shalt see me dare with thee.

HECT. Who of the Trojans, that are present here
At these resolves, adventures to explore
Of his free will yon fleet? Who for this land
Takes on him emprise of such high desert?
Who speaks? For not alone can I achieve
All that my country and allies require.

DOL. I for my country freely dare to 'tempt
This danger; I adventure to explore
Yon fleet: and all the counsels, the designs
Of hostile Greece discover'd, will return:
For this I pledge me to this arduous task.

HECT. Thus glowing with thy country's love, thy name,
Dolon, hast thou deserv'd; thy father's house,
Glorious before, more glorious hast thou made.

DOL. Therefore behoves me toil: but he that toils
Deserves his meed; reward to every work

Annex'd gives double life and double grace.

HECT. And this is just; against it urge I nought:

Fix on thy meed, aught save my sov'reign pow'r.

DOL. Far from my wish thy pow'r that guards the state.

HECT. Is it to Priam's blood to be allied?

DOL. I have no wish above my rank to wed.

HECT. Art thou of gold desirous? We have gold.

DOL. My house hath store of gold; it knows no want.

HECT. What wou'dst thou then of all that Ilium holds?

DOL. Rich gifts, the foe subdued, engage to give.

HECT. Ask: I will give thee aught, except the chiefs.

DOL. Slay them; nor check from Sparta's king thy hands.

HECT. Wou'dst thou receive Oileus' son thy prize?

DOL. The ploughman's toil ill suits such delicate hands.

HECT. What captive for his ransom wou'dst thou ask?

DOL. I said before my house hath store of gold.

HECT. Come then, and from the spoils choose what thou wilt.

DOL. These to the gods within their temples hang.

HECT. Greater than this what prize wilt thou demand?

DOL. The horses of Achilles: for my toils

Deserve a worthy meed, since to the chance

Of fortune greatly do I stake my life.

HECT. These are my wish, the horses thou hast ask'd,

For they are sprung from an immortal strain,

Themselves immortal, which the warlike son

Of Peleus bear: the monarch of the main,

Neptune, who loves to tame the fiery steed,

Gave them, so fame reports, to Peleus. Yet

I will not to thy hopes, high rais'd by me,

Be false: this glorious prize, to grace thy house,

The chariot of Achilles will I give.

DOL. I thank thee: this receiv'd, my boast will be

Of all the Phrygians to have gain'd a prize

Most glorious for my courage. Nor shou'dst thou

Envy; for thee a thousand others wait,

Lord of this land, in which thou may'st delight.

CHOR. Great the attempt, and great the meed, at which

Thy thought aspiring aims; if thou obtain it,

Blest wilt thou be; but glorious is the toil.
 To be allied to kings is also great.
 But this may Retribution from the gods
 Regard; from man it seems secure to thee.

DOL. I go then; but will visit first my house,
 And there attire me as best suits my task:
 Thence to the Grecian navy bend my steps.

CHOR. What other dress than this wilt thou assume?

DOL. What suits th' adventure, and my secret walk.

CHOR. From a wise man I would learn something wise:
 Say, in what dress wilt thou array thyself?

DOL. A wolf's dark hide I o'er my back will throw,
 And in its perfect form his savage head
 Place on my head: then prone upon my hands,
 My arms his legs resembling, on four feet
 With imitated step, not by the foes
 Detected, as a wolf I will approach
 Their trenches, and the outworks of their ships:
 But when I tread on ground remote from sight,
 Erect I walk; this is my artful plan.

CHOR. And may the son of Maia, Mercury,
 The king that guards th' artificer of wiles,
 Thither conduct thee safe, and back again.
 Thou hast thy task, and may success be thine.

DOL. Safe will I come, and, having slain the king
 Of Ithaca, will bring thee back his head,
 (Holding this certain proof thou shalt confess
 That Dolon to the Argive navy went,)
 Or Diomedes: with not unbloodied hand
 Will I return e'er morning's orient light.

CHORUS.

STRO. 1. O thou, who lov'st the hallow'd ground to tread
 Of Delos, and the Lycian shrine,
 Thymbræan Phœbus, pow'r divine,
 Thy bright locks waving on thy sacred head,
 Grasping thy silver bow, O come!
 Guidethou hisstepsthrough night's dark shade,

- Safe let the bold advent'rer roam,
 O guard him, and thy Dardans aid;
 For us thy mighty pow'r employ,
 Thou, who didst build the ancient walls of Troy!
- ANTIS. 1. The Grecian fleet, the Grecian camp t' explore
 Safe through night's dangers let him go;
 Then, known the counsels of the foe,
 Safe to his household gods the youth restore.
 Beneath my lord's avenging spear
 When Greece through all her squadrons bleeds,
 Him let the well-earn'd chariot bear,
 Drawn by th' immortal Phthian steeds,
 Steeds which, obedient to the rein.
 To Peleus gave the monarch of the main.
- STRO. 2. For he, his household gods to save,
 And greatly for his country brave,
 Alone dares trace the dang'rous shore,
 Alone the hostile camp explore.
 O how this gen'rous ardour I admire!
 Rare, very rare the great and good:
 Yet when the wild tempestuous flood
 Rolls the terrific tide of arms,
 And shakes the state with fierce alarms,
 Some dauntless Phrygian glows with martial fire,
 (A fire which sometimes warms e'en Mysia's train,)
 Who my confederates hold in deep disdain.
- ANTIS. 2. Amidst their tents what Grecian found
 Shall our invading warrior wound,
 As prone with mimic tread he goes,
 In form a wolf, among the foes?
 O may the Spartan bleed beneath his sword!
 Might he, their chief among the dead,
 Hew from the bleeding trunk his head,
 And bear it back to Helen's view,
 That her ill nuptials she may rue,
 Mourning the brother of her former lord,
 Who for a Wanton, furious, to destroy,
 Led in a thousand ships his troops to Troy!

SHEPHERD, HECTOR, CHORUS.

- SHEP. Prince, may it ever be my charge to bear
Such tidings to my lords, as now I bring.
- HECT. You rustics are too simple: thou art come
Something, I ween, relating to the flocks
In hour unmeet to tell thy lords now arm'd.
Dost thou not know my house? Dost thou not know
My father's royal mansion? There behoves thee
Proclaim aloud the welfare of the flocks.
- SHEP. We shepherds are too simple: yet what now
I bring thee merits thy attention, Prince.
- HECT. Forbear, nor tell me of thy rural charge:
War in our hands and warlike arms we bear.
- SHEP. Of these I come to tell thee, for a chief
Leading his mighty pow'rs, a friend to thee,
Marches in haste to aid this land in war.
- HECT. Whence is he? From what country doth he come?
- SHEP. From Thrace; by fame reported Strymon's son.
- HECT. Doth Rhesus, say'st thou, tread on Trojan ground?
- SHEP. Thy knowledge hath reliev'd me from much talk.
- HECT. O'er Ida's heights why doth he hold his march,
In devious error from the car-track'd plains?
- SHEP. I know not with assurance; but my thoughts
Conjecture: not amiss through night's dark shades
He takes his toilsome march o'er Ida's heights,
Hearing the plains were fill'd with troops of foes.
Great terror to the swains, who on the steeps
Of Ida dwell, the sacred soil whence sprung
The Trojan race, he caus'd, as in the night
He through the forest, haunt of beasts, advanc'd:
For loud the stream of Thracians pour'd along.
Struck with amaze we to the summits drive
Our flocks, lest from the host of Greece a band
Were come to ravage, and lay waste thy folds.
But soon their voice was heard distinct, and known
Not to be Grecian: then we ceas'd to fear,
Down to the troops, advanc'd t' explore the pass,
I went, and ask'd them in the Thracian tongue

Who was the Chief, and whence, that led to Troy
 His social arms? Inform'd of all I wish'd
 To know, I stood, and Rhesus, like a god
 High on his car, whirl'd by his Thracian steeds,
 Beheld: their necks white as the winter's snow
 A plate of gold clos'd round, the forms of shields
 In gold emblazon'd on their shoulders shone:
 In brass a Gorgon on their frontals, such
 As on the Ægis of Minerva, bound,
 With many a ringing boss, excites dismay.
 The number of his forces by no means
 Could I compute, for far beyond the view
 The files extended; but his cavalry
 Is num'rous, num'rous is the thick array
 Of those that carry shields, of those that bend
 The bow in fight; and num'rous is the train
 Of light-arm'd troops clad in the Thracian vest.
 Such is the chief, who to the aid of Troy
 Advances: him, nor flying nor his spear
 Opposing, shall the son of Peleus 'scape.

CHOR. When to a state the gods intend success,
 Calamities to blessings soon advance.

HECT. I shall find many friends, since my strong spear
 Ensures the conquest ours, and Jove is with us.
 But these I want not, who declin'd to share
 Our toils before, when the rude breath of war
 Shook with tempestuous violence our sails.
 Rhesus hath giv'n full proof how firm a friend
 He was to Troy: for to the feast he comes;
 But the bold hunters, when they won the prey,
 He join'd not, nor assisted with his spear.

CHOR. Well dost thou blame, and hold such friends in scorn;
 Yet such as wish to aid the state receive.

HECT. Sufficeth it we guard the tow'rs of Troy.

CHOR. Art thou assur'd that conquest now is thine?

HECT. I am: and this th' approaching dawn shall shew.

CHOR. Regard the future: change oft Fortune works.

HECT. Aid, that comes late to friends, my soul abhors.

SHEP. Prince, to reject our friends gives cause of blame,
His sight alone would strike the foe with dread.

CHOR. Since he advances, not as an ally
But as a friend with hospitable rites
Receive him : of his aid the grace is lost.

HECT. Just * thy advice, and timely was † thy heed. * To the Chorus.
In all his golden arms, on thy report, † To the Shepherd.
Let Rhesus come, and aid this state in war.

CHORUS.

STRO. 1. Daughter of Jove, avenging pow'r,
The tongue's vain boast restrain :
My thoughts on this important hour,
My soul is bent t' explain.
Son of the Thracian river, dost thou come,
Come to thy friend, a grateful guest,
To grace his hall, to share his feast ?
For thee at length from thy far-distant home
Thy mother, nymph of the Pierian spring,
And, grac'd with many a bridge, the river Strymon bring.

ANTIS. 1. As in his stream the tuneful Muse
Delights her limbs to lave,
Her charms th' enraptur'd Strymon views,
Rolls on, in form a wave,
Curls on her chaste breast, and becomes thy sire.
To me thou com'st a radiant Jove,
As swift thy snow-white coursers move.
Now, O my country, Phrygia now respire ;
The fav'ring god repels these dire alarms,
Jove the Deliverer comes, and present aids thy arms.

STRO. 2. Once more shall ancient Troy prolong
In feasts the joyful day ;
Once more awake the jocund song,
And Love's sweet voice obey ;
The grape's rich juice shall flow around once more.
The sons of Atreus o'er the main
Shall seek their Spartan realms again,
And fly with wild dismay the Trojan shore.

This by thy spear achiev'd, thy thund'ring hand,
May'st thou with glory go, and grace thy native land!

ANTIS. 2. Come then, appear, thy shield of gold
Before Pelides' eyes
On thy strong arm obliquely hold;
High on thy car arise,
Lash thy fleet steeds, and shake thy pointed spear.
None, who against thee dares advance,
Shall join in Juno's fane the dance,
And in her rites a part at Argos bear:
His fate beneath the Thracian javelin slain,
To lie, a grateful load, on Troy's ensanguin'd plain.

O mighty king!—Thou, Thrace, hast gallantly
Train'd this young lion: kingly is his port.
See you his puissant limbs enclos'd in gold?
Hear you the bosses of his shield, how loud
They ring? A god, O Troy, the god of war
Himself advances, the Strymonian son
Of the melodious Muse, to cheer thy toils.

RHESUS, HECTOR, CHORUS.

RHES. Hail, noble offspring of a noble sire,
Chief of this country, Hector! I address thee
After long interval of time. But thus
To see thy state successful, thus to see
Thy arms within their bulwarks coop the foes,
Gives my soul joy. I too am come to raze
Their walls, and 'midst their ships to hurl the flames.

HECT. Son of the Thracian Strymon, and the Muse
Thy tuneful mother, always do I love
To speak the truth, I bear no double mind.
Long since behov'd it thee, long since, to come
And share the toils of Troy, nor, far as lies
In thee, to suffer her to fall beneath
The hostile spear of Greece. Thou wilt not say
That, because not invited by thy friends,
Thou didst not come, nor succour, nor regard us.

What herald, or what embassy from Troy
Came not, imploring thee to aid our state?
What gifts, to do thee grace, did we not send?
But thou, by blood allied, and of the race
Barbaric, for thy part hast yielded us,
Though of barbaric race, a prey to Greece.
Yet from thy small domain I with this hand
Advanc'd thee to the wide-extended rule
Of Thrace, when round Pangæus, and again
In the Pæonian land, I boldly charg'd
The Thracian chiefs in front, and broke the shield:
That people thus I made obedient to thee.
But, spurning at the grace of these good deeds,
Thou com'st the last to aid thy lab'ring friends.
Of those, who, nought allied to us by blood,
Came early, some have fall'n in fight, and lie
Beneath the high-raisd tombs, no slender proof
Of their firm faith; some here in martial arms,
And near their harness'd cars, the night's chill breath
And the sun's scorching fire abiding bear
With manly resolution; not, like thee,
Lolling on couches with repeated draughts
Drain the capacious goblet circling round.
I charge thee with this blame; that thou may'st know
Hector's free soul, I speak it to thy face.

RHES. And such am I, the plain straight path of truth
I hold; I likewise bear no double mind.
Indignant at my absence from this land,
My heart was touch'd with greater grief than thine:
But the wild Scythians bord'ring on my realms,
As I prepar'd my march to Troy, against me
Banded in arms: I, o'er the Euxine sea
To pass my forces, to its shore advanc'd;
There on the ground the Scythians roll'd in blood
Gor'd by the spear; and in the carnage mix'd
The Thracians: this mischance retarded me,
That to the fields of Troy, to aid thy arms,
I came not: but when now their force in fight

Was wasted, and their sons as hostages
Giv'n up, the annual tribute to my house
Appointed to be brought, I come, in ships
Crossing the narrow sea, my painful march
Held o'er the frontiers of the land on foot.
Not, as thou hast reproach'd me, in my house
With gold resplendent lolling on the couch,
Draining the goblet; but the freezing winds,
That o'er Pæonia and the Thracian sea
Rage wildly, sleepless in this vest close-clasp'd
I felt, I bore. If I come late, in time
Yet am I come: but thou, the ling'ring war
To the tenth year protracted, dost not yet
Accomplish aught, day wasting after day,
The war with Greece as with the sportive die
Continued: but for me to storm their tow'rs,
To force the works that guard their ships, and slay
These Grecians, shall the course of one bright sun
Suffice; the next from Ilium march I back
To Thrace, brief end to all thy labours giv'n.
But now of you let not one grasp the shield,
For I will check the vaunt of Greece in arms,
And spread the slaughter wide, though late I came.

CHOR. Friendly, O friendly is thy voice; from Jove
Thou com'st our friend alone. The vengeful force
Of Envy from thy words may Jove supreme
Will to avert! The hostile fleet of Greece
Nor in past time, nor now, hath brought a chief
Excelling thee. How can Achilles, how
Can Ajax thy strong spear in fight sustain?
O may I this day see thy hands with blood
Distain'd the glorious prize of conquest win!

RHES. For my long absence this will I for thee
Achieve: forgive me, Nemesis, the boast!
When from the foe this city we have freed,
And to the gods the first-fruits of the spoils
Thou hast selected, 'gainst the Argive land
Warm is my wish with thee to march, and spread

Through all the states of Greece the waste of war,
That they may learn to feel their share of ills.

HECT. Might I, disburden'd of this present ill,
Confirm the state in safety, as before,
I to the gods should owe most grateful praise:
But to waste Argos and the states of Greece
With war, is not so easy as thou deemest.

RHES. Are not the bravest of the Grecians here?

HECT. We scorn them not, but strive to chase them hence.

RHES. The whole then, slaying these, shall we achieve.

HECT. For distant views the present slight not now.

RHES. Tame wou'dst thou suffer, nor repay the wrong?

HECT. O'er a wide empire here my sway extends.

But, as it likes thee best, in the left wing,
Or in the right, or in the centre, join'd
The social troops, to fix the shield, and range
Thy pow'rs in firm array, the choice is thine.

RHES. Hector, it is my wish against the foe
To fight alone: but if thou deem it shame,
Since thou before hast toil'd such length of time,
Not to hurl flames, with me, against their ships,
Place me oppos'd t' Achilles and his troops.

HECT. 'Gainst him thou canst not point thy furious spear.

RHES. Fame hath reported that he sail'd to Troy.

HECT. He sail'd, and is here present; but enrag'd
Against the chiefs lifts not his spear with them.

RHES. Who of their host, next him, hath gain'd renown?

HECT. Ajax in nought inferior do I hold,
Or the brave son of Tydeus: in their host
The glozing orator, Ulysses, bears
A soul daring enough: he to this land
Hath done the greatest mischief; to the shrine
Of Pallas late he work'd his way, and bore
By stealth her sacred image to the ships
Of Argos: next a fraudulent vagrant, drest
Mean in a beggar's garb, our rampir'd walls
He enter'd, utt'ring curses on the Greeks,
From whom he came a spy; then made escape,

Murd'ring the guards, and those that at the gates
 Were stationed ; some close ambush, some dark fraud,
 He always plans, and near the city lurks
 At the Thymbræan altar : 'gainst his wiles
 We strive with anxious wariness to guard.

RHES. No brave man e'er would deign with secret guile
 To slay a foe, but meets him front to front.
 Him who, thou say'st, in wily ambush lurks
 Planning his dark devices, I will seize
 Alive, and fix him on a stake impaled
 Without the gates to gorge the birds of prey ;
 A robber, and a plund'rer of the gods
 Deserves by such a rig'rous doom to die.

HECT. Now in your tents repose ; it yet is night.
 I to the place will lead thee, where thy troops
 May rest till morn, apart from stations fill'd.
 Our watch-word, if occasion aught requires,
 Is Phœbus ; in thy mem'ry fix it deep,
 And give it round to all the Thracian host.
 Go* you, before the lines hold wakeful guard, *To the guard.
 And Dolon, sent t' explore the Grecian fleet,
 Receive ; for if he safely wins his way,
 E'en now he to the Trojan camp draws near.

CHORUS.

STRO. Who now before the camp keeps guard ?
 Who to relieve me is prepar'd ?
 The stars are sinking from the skies,
 The rising Pleiads shew th' approach of day ;
 High in mid heav'n the Eagle flies :
 Awake, arise : why this delay ?

574. When the infant Jupiter was nursed in a cave in Crete, the Bees brought him Ambrosia, the Eagle Nectar : for which, when he obtained the kingdom of his father, he made this bird immortal, and placed him in the skies. Maro, as cited by Natalis Comes, Mythol. l. 2. Aratus gives a different reason, and assigns him four stars, one bright on his head, one on each pennon, and one obscure on his breast : in his talons he holds an arrow, which also has four stars, one at each extremity, and two on the feathers.

Awake, the watch forbids repose :
 See, the pale moon a fainter lustre throws :
 The dawn is nigh, the dawn appears.
 See you yon star the heav'ns adorn ?

'Tis the bright harbinger of morn,

New-ris'n his gold-encircled head he rears.

SEMICH. Whose first the charge the watch to hold ?

SEMICH. Chorœbus, son of Mygdon old.

SEMICH. Who next the task sustain ?

SEMICH. Pæonia's troops awoke Cilicia's host.

SEMICH. The Mysians rous'd our train.

SEMICH. For the fifth watch the Lycians take their post,
 By lot assign'd, and this the hour :
 Let us then go, and raise their pow'r.

ANTIS. Where silver Simois winds along,
 I hear the sweet bird's mournful song :
 High-seated on some waving spray

To varying chords the warbling nightingale
 Attempts her melodious lay,

And pours her sorrows through the vale.

The flocks now feed on Ida's height,

Loud shrills the past'ral pipe, and charms the night.

O sleep, I feel thy soothing pow'r :

Gently it creeps my eyes to close,

And seal them in a calm repose ;

Sweet thy approach in morn's o'erlabour'd hour.

SEMICH. Why comes not he, who dar'd to go,

By Hector sent, t' explore the foe ?

SEMICH. His long stay wakes my fear.

SEMICH. Should he, on secret ambush fall'n, be slain,

Soon we his loss shall hear.

SEMICH. The night's fifth watch demands the Lycian train,
 By lot assign'd, and this the hour :

Let us then go, and raise their pow'r.

ULYSSES, DIOMEDE.

ULYS. Didst thou, Tydides, hear the sound of arms,
 Or doth imagination mock my sense ?

- DIOM. No: 'tis the clashing of the iron chains,
Which at their cars detain the steeds : I heard
With fear, till I their rattling mark'd distinct.
- ULYS. Look through the gloom, lest on the guards thou light.
- DIOM. Dark as it is, with caution will I tread. [know'st.
- ULYS. The watch-word, shou'dst thou rouse them, well thou
- DIOM. I heard from Dolon, Phœbus is the word.
- ULYS. Ha ! Not a foe within these tents I see.
- DIOM. Yet Dolon said that these are Hector's tents,
To gore whose breast I grasp this pointed spear.
- ULYS. What means this ? Are they gone to seize some post ?
- DIOM. Some wile of war, perchance, against us form'd.
- ULYS. Hector is bold, now his arms prosper, bold.
- DIOM. What shall we do, Ulysses ? For this man
We find not in his tent : our hopes have fail'd.
- ULYS. Return we to the station of our ships
With speed. The god, that gives his arms success,
Saves him : 'gainst Fortune we should not contend.
- DIOM. Against Æneas let us then advance,
Or Paris, whom of all the Phrygians most
We hate, and with our swords hew off their heads.
- ULYS. Them in the night, and 'midst an host of foes,
How wilt thou seek, and without danger slay ?
- DIOM. Shame were it should we to the ships return,
No signal deed against the foe achiev'd.
- ULYS. No deed achiev'd ! From Dolon slain, the spy
T' explore our camp, preserve we not these spoils ?
Or dost thou ween to spread destruction wide
Through all the host ? Think better ; be advis'd ;
Let us return : may we in this succeed !
- MIN. What ! would you quit the station of the foe,
And hence, your hearts with anguish rent, retreat ?
If Hector by your hands to bleed the god
Grants not, or Paris, are you not inform'd
That Rhesus with a mighty train is come
To aid the arms of Troy ? If through this night
He lives till morning dawns, him nor the spear
Of Ajax or Achilles will restrain,

But he will storm your rampires, in his might
 Force his way wide within the gates, and spread
 Through all the naval stations of the Greeks
 Wild havoc. If he fall beneath thy sword,
 All is achiev'd. The tents of Hector then
 Forbear, and all thy thoughts of carnage here :
 For death awaits him from another hand.

OLYS. Royal Minerva, (for that well-known voice
 Is to mine ear familiar, in my toils
 Since thou art always present to my aid,)
 Say, in what quarter doth the Thracian sleep,
 Where, 'midst the wide barbaric host, his tent?

MIN. Near is he station'd, not among the host
 Embodied, but without the lines his place
 Hector assign'd till morn succeeds to night.
 Behind the Thracian cars his snowy steeds
 Are bound, conspicuous through the night's dark gloom;
 For, like the plumage of the river swan,
 They shine : their lord first slain, lead these away,
 A glorious prize : for no such harness'd steeds
 The earth in all its wide extent contains.

OLYS. Rush thou, Tydides, on the Thracian train ;
 Or give that task to me, seize thou the steeds.

DIOM. Mine be the work of slaughter ; manage thou
 The steeds, for thou art skill'd in each fine art,
 And wise of thought : to each should be assign'd
 Employ, where most his pow'rs may be of use.

MIN. But Paris tow'rds us through the lines I see
 Approaching : from some night-guard hath he heard
 Uncertain rumour of advancing foes.

DIOM. Comes he a train attending, or alone !

MIN. Alone, to Hector's tent, as it should seem,
 He comes, to bear these tidings of the watch.

DIOM. Ought not his blood then first to stain our swords?

MIN. Thou canst not more than is decreed : the fates
 Allow not that beneath thy hand he die.

'Gainst whom thou'rt come to raise the deadly sword
 Haste. To this man the semblance will I wear

Of Venus, his associate pow'r, at hand
 To aid him in his labours; and amuse
 With vain discourse the man I hate: for he,
 Near though he be, hears not our words, nor knows
 Who by thy daring hand e'en now must bleed.

MINERVA, PARIS.

PAR. Leader of Troy's brave hosts, my brother, thee,
 Hector, I call: sleep'st thou? I must awake thee.
 A body of the foes are nigh our camp
 Advanc'd, or ruffian spoilers, or some spies.

MIN. Resume thy courage; Venus, fav'ring pow'r,
 Protects thee; of thy war the care is mine.
 For, not unmindful of the honour shewn
 To me, that grace receiv'd I recompense.
 And now to Troy's victorious troops I come,
 Leading a man, to thee a potent friend,
 The Thracian son of the melodious Muse
 Divine, and Strymon, whom he boasts his sire.

PAR. Always art thou benevolent to Troy:
 I, when I judg'd thee, goddess, to my life
 The richest ornament, and to this state
 Thy fav'ring pow'r, with pride I speak it, won.
 Nothing distinct I heard, but 'mongst the guards
 A rumour ran that from the Grecian camp
 Come spies: he saw them not, who told me this;
 And he, who saw them, hath not what to say
 Assur'd: for this to Hector's tent I came.

MIN. Be not dismay'd; no danger threatens the camp:
 Hector is gone t' appoint the Thracian's post.

PAR. I rest assur'd, confiding in thy words,
 And go to guard my station, free from fear.

MIN. Go: be assur'd all this shall be my care,
 To see my friends successful: thou shalt know
 How prompt I am to aid them.—Now to you,
 Most lov'd of mortals, I address my words;
 Son of Laertes, sheath your reeking blades,
 The Thracian chief lies by your hands, his steeds

Are seiz'd : the enemies alarm'd advance
 Against us. With what speed you may, retire,
 Fly to your vessels ; why delay, the storm
 Of foes thus rolling on, to save yourselves ?

ULYSSES, DIOMEDE, CHORUS.

CHOR. Hola, hola ! strike, strike, strike, strike, kill, kill.
 What man is this ? Look here : of him I speak.
 Thieves, that for plunder in the night disturb
 The camp : come hither, hither all with speed.
 I have them, I have seiz'd them.—What hast thou
 To say ? whence comest thou ? who art thou ? Speak.

ULYS. 'Tis not for thee to know : if thou dost aught
 Of outrage, thou shalt die for it this day.

CHOR. Wilt thou not give the watch-word, e'er my spear
 Pierce through thy breast ?

ULYS. Advance not : fear no ill.

CHOR. Go near him, some one ; strike him ; strike him all.

ULYS. Wou'dst thou slay Rhesus ?

CHOR. Thou hast fall'n on one
 That will slay thee.

ULYS. Hold your hands all.

CHOR. My hands
 I will not hold.

ULYS. Thou wou'dst not kill a friend ?

CHOR. Then give the watch-word.

ULYS. Phœbus.

CHOR. 'Tis the word.

Check each his spear. Know'st thou where went the men ?

SEMICH. This way we saw them.

SEMICH. Each pursue their steps,
 Or raise th' alarm.

SEMICH. But to alarm our friends
 Is dreadful in the tumult of the night.

CHORUS.

STRO. What man goes there ?
 Who of his daring soul shall proudly boast,

Escap'd my lifted spear?
 Where shall I find the secret foe?
 His form by what resemblance know?
 Amidst the nightly guards, the station'd host,
 Who dares to take his dauntless way?
 Doth he Thessalia's chief obey?
 Or is he of the Locrian band,
 That dwell along the wave-wash'd shore?
 Or doth his birth some hoar isle boast,
 Of those that love to roam from coast to coast?
 Who is he? whence? and what his native land?
 Whom as supreme of gods doth he adore?

SEMICH. Charge we Ulysses with this deed, or whom?

SEMICH. Whom else, if we conjecture from the past?

SEMICH. On him then dost thou charge this?

SEMICH. And with cause.

SEMICH. 'Gainst us indeed his courage is most bold.

SEMICH. What courage? Whom dost thou commend?

SEMICH. Ulysses.

SEMICH. Praise not a nightly pilferer's treach'rous spear.

CHORUS.

ANTIS. In times long past
 He came to Troy; rheum seem'd to gall his eyes;
 And, o'er his shoulders cast,
 A coarse and tatter'd robe he wore,
 In which conceal'd a sword he bore,
 Thus in a needy vagrant's mean disguise
 He begg'd his bread, and crept along
 Amusing with slight tricks the throng:
 Matted and wild his locks, o'erspread
 With filth which knew no cleansing hand;
 And 'gainst the royal chiefs his tongue
 With loud reproach and keenest curses rung.
 O had just vengeance burst upon his head,
 E'er his vile footsteps mark'd the Phrygian strand!

SEMICH. Be this his deed, or be it not, I fear
 Hector will charge much blame on us the guard.

SEMICH. Objecting what?

SEMICH. Suspicion may arise——

SEMICH. What dost thou? what dismays thee?

SEMICH. That through us
He pass'd.

SEMICH. Who pass'd?

SEMICH. They, to the Phrygian camp
Who came this night.

CHARIOTEER *of RHESUS at a distance.*

Ah me! unhappy me!

O cruel fortune!

SEMICH. Hush: be silent all.

SEMICH. Rouse you: perchance one comes within the toils.

CHAR. O dire mischance to the confederate troops
Of Thrace!

SEMICH. Who vents these groans?

CHAR. Unhappy me!
Unhappy king of Thrace, in that thou'st seen
This most detested Troy! O, what an end
Of life is thine!

CHOR. Who of our social troops
Art thou? Through night's dark gloom mine eyes perceive
But dimly, nor distinguish who thou art.

CHARIOTEER *advancing.*

Where shall I find some prince of Troy? Or where
Beneath his shield hath Hector spread his couch?

What chief of this wide host shall I inform
What hath befall'n us, what a dreadful deed
Some secret hand, that disappears, hath done,
A deed, that works the Thracians open woe?

CHOR. Some mischief to the Thracian host, it seems,
Hath chanc'd, as far as from his words I learn.

CHAR. Despair hath seiz'd our host, our king is fall'n,
Fall'n by a treach'rous blow. This bleeding wound,
O how it tortures me! What death hath fate
Assign'd me? for inglorious I must die,
With Rhesus, to the aid of Troy who came.

CHOR. These evils not obscurely he relates,

But clearly shews us that our friends are fall'n.
CHOR. Ill hath been wrought us, and, besides the ill,
Shame, which the ill with double anguish loads.
To die with glory, if a man must die,
To him that dies is mournful; nature thus
Ordains: but to the living, to his house
Is triumph, is renown: but we are fall'n
Unthinking and inglorious. When our post
Hector assign'd, the watch-word giv'n, we sleep
Stretch'd on the ground, tir'd with the toilsome march;
Nor nightly watch was held, nor in our ranks
Were our arms laid; nor clos'd the yokes that join
Our coursers to the car; for that our king
Was well assur'd of your victorious arms,
And that you wait with morn t' attack the ships,
Careless we rest on our low beds repos'd.
My sleep forsook me soon, with thoughtful heart
Intent with lib'ral hand to feed my steeds,
At early dawn to yoke them for the fight
Expecting; but two men through night's thick gloom
Hov'ring about our camp mine eyes discern:
Soon as I mov'd, they shrunk away, and back
Withdrew: I spoke, and charg'd them not to come
Near to our troops, for from the social bands
I deem'd them wretches forth to pilfer stray'd.
Nought answer'd they; nor knew I more; for now
I to my bed return'd, and slept again.
And in my sleep imagination wrought
This impress on my mind: I saw two wolves,
As in a dream one sees, vault on the backs
Of the white steeds, which oft I fed, and oft
Govern'd their reins, attendant on my lord:
Mounted they lash them; from their bossy bits
They snorted, and indignant bounded high.
To free the coursers from the savages
I rous'd me; for the terror of the night
Broke off my sleep: raising my head I hear
The groans of dying men; and the warm blood

Fresh gushing from my slaughter'd lord, who lay
Gasping in death, spouts on me : up I spring,
My hand unarm'd ; whilst for my spear I search,
A man of vig'rous force drove through my side
His sword ; I felt the weapon, and receiv'd
A deep and ghastly wound : prone to the earth
I fall : they seiz'd the harness'd steeds, and fled.
Ah me, the anguish of my wound ! no more
Can I stand upright : this calamity
I know, for I beheld it : by what means
The slain were stretch'd in death, I cannot say,
Nor by what hand ; but my conjecture deems
That from our friends these direful ills we feel.

CHOR. Thou, who didst guide the slaughter'd Thracian's car,
Charge not these deeds but on the foe. And see,
Hector, inform'd of your misfortunes, comes ;
His look declares his sorrow at your ills.

HECTOR, CHARIOTEER, CHORUS.

HECT. How, ye perfidious workers of base deeds,
How through your station did these spies of Greece
Pass undiscover'd, and amidst the host
This carnage spread ; and you, nor when the camp
They enter'd, nor at their departure, check'd
Their passage ? Whom of these shall chastisement
Requite, but thee ? for thee to guard the host
Thy charge appointed : they have made escape
Unhurt, with many a bitter scoff deriding
Th' unmanly sloth of Troy, and me its chief.
But be you well assur'd—Thou, Sire supreme,
Be witness to my oath !—the scourge, or death
Awaits thee for thy vile offence ; or deem
Hector a mean tame wretch of no account.

CHOR. Distress, ah me ! severe distress is mine.
O mighty Prince, thou guardian of the state,
Then came he, when a messenger to thee
I brought thee tidings that the Grecian host
Through all their naval stations kindled fires.

My wakeful eye hath through the night nor slept,
Nor wink'd. Ah, let not, by the sacred fount
Of Simois, let not, royal chief, thy wrath
Fall on me: of all this not mine the blame.
If in time past improper deed, or word,
In me thou e'er hast mark'd, beneath the earth
Sink me alive; no mercy I implore.

CHAR. Why dost thou menace these? With forg'd pretence,
Barbaric thou, my sense why seek to cheat,
My race barbaric too? Thou didst this deed:
Nor those who lie in death, nor we who bleed,
Admit another: long must be thy speech
And wise, wou'dst thou persuade me that thy friends
Fell not by thee, through thy desire to seize
The coursers, for whose sake thy bloody hand
Murders thy friends, with much entreaty woo'd
To aid thy arms; they came, they perish'd here.
With better grace each hospitable rite
Did Paris violate, than thou, whose hand
Hath slaughter'd thy allies. Nay, tell not me
Some Grecian came, and stain'd our tents with gore.
Who undiscover'd through the Trojan bands
Could pass, and come to us? Thou wast encamp'd
Before us, with the Phrygians: who of these
Is wounded? who of all thy social troops
Is slain, the foe assaulting, as thou say'st,
By stealth? But we are wounded, a worse fate
Some suff'ring view no more the sun's bright beams.
Plain truth to speak, no Grecian we accuse.
What foe, his foot directing through the night,
Could find where Rhesus lay, unless some god
Guided his murd'ers? Nay, they nothing knew
Of his arrival: this is all pretence.

HECT. Long our allies with ours have join'd their arms,
E'er since the Grecians 'gainst this land advanc'd:
With no ill deed have I been charg'd by these.
Should I begin with thee? Such fond desire
To gain the coursers ne'er could seize my heart,

That for their sake my hand should slay my friends.
 This was Ulysses: of the Grecian host
 Who else could do, who else devise this deed?
 I fear him: and my mind is much distress'd,
 Lest Dolon lights upon him, and is slain,
 For he is absent long, nor yet appears.

CHAR. Of your Ulysses nothing do I know;
 But from no foe these wounds have we receiv'd.

HECT. Think so, since so thou art resolv'd to think.

CHAR. How, O my country, shall I die in thee?

HECT. Die not: already have we deaths enough.

CHAR. Where shall I turn me, of my lord depriv'd?

HECT. My house shall shelter thee, and heal thy wound.

CHAR. How shall the hands of murd'ers work my cure?

HECT. He will not cease repeating the same tale.

CHAR. May he that did it perish: not 'gainst thee
 Aims my tongue this; chafe not: but Justice knows.

HECT. Conduct him to my house; attend him so
 That he may not complain. Go you, for thus
 Behoves it us, to those within the walls,
 To Priam and his senate white with age,
 Give notice, to the slain that they assign,
 Nigh meeting roads frequented much, their tombs.

CHOR. Why from thy glorious triumphs back to woes,
 O Troy, doth Fortune throw thee, chang'd thy state?—
 Ah me, portentous this! Above our heads
 What pow'r divine; O king, bears in her arms
 The chief late slain? I tremble at the sight.

THE MUSE, HECTOR, CHORUS.

MUSE. Trojans, behold: the Muse among the wise
 In honour held, one of the sacred Nine,
 I deign my presence, seeing this my son
 Slain by the foes so piteously. The time
 Will come when he, who slew him, train'd in wiles,
 Ulysses, shall receive a worthy meed.

The MUSE. STROPHE.

For thee, my son, these tears that start

Dew with no foreign grief mine eyes;
What anguish rends a mother's heart!

What scenes of blood before me rise!

Ah, what a way to Troy's ensanguin'd plain,
Whilst on thy march attendant wait
Th' ill-omen'd train of gloomy fate,
Did thy steps trace? A mother's tears in vain,
In vain a father's pray'rs oppose.

Alas, my griefs, my tort'ring woes!

For thee, how dear, I heave the groan,

Ah me, my son, my son!

CHOR. Far as beseems a stranger to thy blood,

Thy griefs I pity, and lament thy son.

THE MUSE. ANTISTROPHE.

Perish the king of Æneus' race,

Perish Ulysses, chief abhorr'd;

From whose curs'd hand my woes I trace,

Made childless by his ruthless sword,

My noble son impetuous to destroy:

And Helen, who, her bridal bed,

Enamour'd of a Phrygian, fled,

And proudly spread her wanton sails for Troy.

At Ilium from her guilty flame

On thee, my son, Destruction came,

And from a thousand states, its prey,

Swept all the brave away.

Much while alive, much in the realms below,
Son of Philammon, didst thou grieve my soul.
Thy insolence, which ruin on thee brought,
And thy contention with the Muses caus'd
That I was mother of this hapless son:

970. Diomede the son of Tydeus, whose father was Æneus.

983. Philammon of Delphi, the son of Apollo, a great poet and musician, is one of the first, after Apollo, upon fabulous record as a vocal performer, who accompanied his voice with the sound of the lyre; his son was the celebrated Thamyris. See Dr. Burney's History of the Greek Music. The contest of Thamyris with the Muses is also related by Homer in the Catalogue of the Ships.

For, as I pass'd the river's flowing course,
I chanc'd near Strymon's genial bed to come.
But when the Muses high Pangæus reach'd,
Whose veins are gold, with all our instruments
Of tuneful sound, and with the Thracian bard
In melody contended, him of sight,
For that our skill he dar'd revile, our rage
Depriv'd. And when I brought thee forth, my son,
In rev'rence of my sisters, and through sense
Of modesty, I sent thee to the stream
Of beauteous-flowing Strymon : thee thy sire
Not to a mortal house, but to the Nymphs,
That haunt the fountains, to be nurtur'd gave.
Well by those virgins train'd thou didst become
The king of Thrace, and first of men, my son.
When for thy country thou thy warlike troops
Didst range in fight, nought fear'd I of thy death :
But charg'd thee to the walls of Troy thy foot
Ne'er to advance, as prescient of thy fate.
But many an embassy with honour sent
From Hector, and the senate, wrought with thee
To come, and with thy arms to aid thy friends.
But all this slaughter to Minerva's charge
Must be imputed : for Ulysses nought
Could do, nor he, who did the deed, the son
Of Tydeus. Think*not this conceal'd from me : * to Minerva.
But high the sister Muses hold thy town
In honour, and frequent thy favour'd land :
There Orpheus, to this murder'd chief by blood
Allied, divulg'd the mystic rites forbidden
To be reveal'd : yet hast thou slain my son.
Musæus too, the boast of Athens, sage
Deep vers'd in wisdom's lore, the tuneful Nine
And Phœbus taught : this is my recompense,
Thus in my arms to hold my son, thus pour
My plaints : no voice besides shall join the strain.

- CHOR. Hector, the Thracian did us wrong, who charg'd
Revilingly the leader's death on us.
- HECT. I knew it well: there needs no prophet's voice
To tell us that he perish'd by the wiles
Of base Ulysses. When the troops of Greece
I saw invade my country, to my friends
Why should I not send heralds to implore
That they would march in arms, and aid this state?
I sent; he came; he ow'd me this, to share
My toils; no pleasure gives his death to me;
No; but with zeal I now will raise his tomb,
And with him precious vests unsparing burn.
- MUSE. In darkness low in earth he shall not lie:
This grace will I implore of Pluto's bride,
Daughter of Ceres, from whose bounty spring
The earth's rich fruits, that she will give me back
His soul; she owes me this, that she may shew
Just honours to the friends of Orpheus due.
To me hereafter he shall be as dead,
And no more viewing the sweet light of heav'n:
For in my presence he shall come no more,
No more shall see his mother: but conceal'd
In the deep caverns of the earth, whose veins
Are silver, of a mortal made a god,
He shall behold the light of heav'n, a priest
Of Bacchus, who his dwelling on the rocks
Of high Pangæus holds, a god rever'd
By all that in his hallow'd rites are train'd.
More patient than the goddess of the sea
I bear my griefs; for her son too must die.
O'er thee my sisters first shall raise the strain
Of woe: for her Achilles not long hence
Let Thetis mourn; him not Minerva's pow'r,
Who slew thee, shall deliver; such a shaft,
So fatal, Phœbus in his quiver holds.
Ye pangs that rend a parent's heart, of ills
To mortals the severest, he, who deems
Rightly of you, will childless pass through life,

Nor shed a parent's tear on a child's tomb !

CHOR. His mother of his fun'ral rites takes charge.

But, Hector, wou'dst thou aught of daring deed,
Now is the time ; these are the streaks of morn.

HECT. Go then, and bid thy comrades be in arms

This instant ; yoke your horses to the car ;

Hold flaming torches in your hands, and wait

The trumpet's signal ; for I trust to spread

Destruction through the host of Greece, to rend

Their rampires to the ground, and hurl the flames

Against their ships : so shall yon orient rays

Restore the day of liberty to Troy.

CHOR. Obey the royal chieftain : let us go

Array'd in arms, and through our social troops

Declare his high commands. Soon may the god,

That favours us, our arms with conquest grace !



THE
TROJAN DAMES.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

NEPTUNE

MINERVA

HECUBA

CASSANDRA

ANDROMACHE

HELENA

MENELAUS

TALTHYBIUS

CHORUS of TROJAN DAMES.

THE
TROJAN DAMES.

A MIGHTY kingdom overturned, its imperial city wasted and levelled with the ground, its venerable king, his numerous sons, and all the brave defenders of their country fallen by the sword, their unhappy wives captive and assigned to slavery in a foreign land, are events of such complicated misery, as must deeply affect the human heart. Euripides knew how to give these woes their full force; his tender and pathetic spirit raises here the most exquisite sensations of pity, which increase to terror, and swell on to distraction. One would have thought that the real existence of evils could not be greater, and that the imagination could not form a deeper distress than that of Hecuba on her first appearance, lying on the ground before the tent of Agamemnon; but every new scene presents her with some new cause of grief of the most affecting nature; the gradation is astonishing; and the whole drama resembles a terrible storm, whose fury falls upon some magnificent edifice: at first it is awful and alarming; but its violence increases; every flash of lightning sets some part of the structure on fire, every clap of thunder shakes some part to the ground, till at length the

whole is one dreadful scene of tempest, flames, and ruin.

The Scene is in the plains of Troy, before the tent of Agamemnon.

THE
TROJAN DAMES.

NEPT. FROM the vast depths of the Ægean sea,
Where many a maze with graceful-moving feet
Unwinds the choir of Nereids, Neptune comes.
For from the time when Phœbus and myself
Rais'd on this land the rampir'd tow'rs of Troy
With exact skill, my mind hath never lost
Its fondness for this city of the Phrygians,
Which now in ruins by the arms of Greece
Smokes on the ground: for by Minerva's art
Epëus of Parnassian Phocis fram'd
An Horse, whose hollow womb was full of arms,
And sent within the walls th' enormous bulk
Big with destruction; hence in after times
It shall be called *The Horse of Spears*, the spear
In its dark sides conceal'd. The sacred groves
Are desolate, the temples of the gods
Flooded with gore, and Priam at the steps
Ascending to the shrine of guardian Jove
Hath fall'n and died: much gold, and Phrygian spoils
Are to the Grecian vessels borne; the troops
Expect the fav'ring gale to breathe from shore,
That after ten long years, which they have pass'd
In arms to lay this city low, with joy
They may behold their children and their wives.
But I, by Argive Juno, mighty queen,
O'erpow'r'd, and Pallas, whose united force

Hath crush'd the Phrygians, quit the once fam'd tow'rs
 Of Ilium, and my altars: for when once
 Wide through a city desolation spreads,
 The hallow'd rites, the worship of the gods
 Must be neglected. Now with loud laments
 Of captive dames to their new lords assign'd
 Scamander's banks resound: th' Arcadian some,
 Some the Thessalian bands, and some the sons
 Of Theseus, chiefs of Athens, as decides
 The lot, obtain. Beneath this roof are those
 Of Troy's unhappy daughters by no lot
 Dispos'd, but to the leaders of the host
 Selected; these among, by righteous doom
 A captive led, the Spartan Helena.
 And Hecuba, if any wish to see
 Her and her wretched state, before the gates
 Lies stretch'd, and pours an ample flood of tears;
 And she hath ample cause; for at the tomb
 Rais'd to Achilles hath her daughter died,
 How piteously! the poor Polyxena;
 Priam is fall'n, her sons are fall'n; and her,
 Cassandra, whom the royal Phœbus gave
 To rove a virgin, and declare the fates,
 To secret nuptials Agamemnon leads
 Perforce, religion and the gods despis'd.
 But, O my town once flourishing, once crown'd
 With beauteous-structur'd battlements, farewell!
 Had not Minerva sunk thee in the dust,
 On thy firm base e'en now thou might'st have stood.

NEPTUNE, MINERVA.

- MIN. Is it permitted me, all former thoughts
 Of variance laid aside, t' address a god,
 Nearest by lineage to my sire allied,
 Of mighty pow'r, and honour'd by the gods?
- NEPT. It is permitted thee: for kindred blood,

Royal Minerva, hath a potent charm
To reconcile the alienated mind.

MIN. Thy gentleness in anger claims my praise.

What I would offer, king, imports us both.

NEPT. Hast thou of new aught from the gods to speak,
From Jove, or other of the heav'nly pow'rs?

MIN. No: for the sake of 'Troy I to thy pow'r
Am come, to use it in one common cause.

NEPT. Dost thou, thy former hostile thoughts appeas'd,
Pity its ruins blazing in the flames?

MIN. First speak to this: wilt thou with joint design,
Joint labour, aid in what I wish to do?

NEPT. Most willingly: but wish to know thy purpose,
If to the Trojans friendly, or to Greece.

MIN. The Trojans hated once, would I delight,
To th' Argive host embittering their return.

NEPT. Why have thy measures this quick change, in love
Or hate, whiche'er betides, too violent?

MIN. Me know'st thou not how outrag'd, and my shrine?

NEPT. I know: Cassandra Ajax dragg'd by force.

MIN. Nor punish'd by the Grecians, nor reprov'd.

NEPT. Yet by thy pow'r these Grecians wasted Troy.

MIN. Therefore with thee I now would work them woe.

NEPT. Thy purpose finds me prompt: what wou'dst thou do?

MIN. With rig'rous vengeance sadden their return.

NEPT. On land, or when they plough the briny wave?

MIN. When o'er the deep they steer their course for Greece,

The stormy rain, the fierce-descending hail,

And the dark fury of tempestuous winds

My sire will send: to me, his word is pass'd,

His fiery thunder will he give, to hurl

Against the Grecians, and with lightning flames

To burn their ships. Do thou, for thine the pow'r,

With foaming billows vast and whirling gulfs

Tempest the vex'd Ægean; with their dead

88, &c. This fine passage has acquired additional sublimity in the hands of Virgil in the opening of the Æneid.

Fill the Eubœan bay : that they may learn
Henceforth with reverence to approach my shrines,
And pay due honours to the other gods.

NEPT. It shall be so : few words this favour needs.
With tempests will I chafe th' Ægean sea ;
The shores of Mycone, the Delian rocks,
Scyrus, and Lemnus, and the rugged brow
Of steep Caphareus shall with numerous dead
Be cover'd. But to high Olympus go,
The bolts of thunder from thy father's hands
Receive ; then wait till they unmoor their fleet.
Unwise is he, whoe'er of mortals storms
Beleagur'd towns, and crush'd in ruins wastes
The temples of the gods, the hallow'd tombs
Where sleep the dead : for he shall perish soon.

HEC. Rise, thou unhappy ; from the cold ground raise
Thy head, thy neck : this is no longer Troy,
In Troy we rule no longer : Ah the change
Of fortune ! Bear the change ; sail with the tide,
With fortune sail, nor turn the prow of life
Against the wave, nor struggle with thy fate.—
Oh woe, woe, woe ! Why is it not allow'd
A wretch like me to moan my country lost,
My children, and my husband ? Thou high boast
Of noble ancestry, how art thou shrunk,
How vanish'd ! What shall I in silence hold ?
Or what not hold in silence ? What bewail ?
In what a woful state are these poor limbs
Reclin'd, how ill on this hard bed now stretch'd ?
Ah me, my head ! Ah me, my temples ! Ah,
My sides ! O how I long to change my place,
To roll, and roll, and shift from side to side,
Proofs of the restless torture of my mind !
E'en here th' unhappy have a Muse, to give
These woes a voice, far other than the notes
To joy and dance attun'd. Ye winged barks,
Which through the purple seas and shelter'd bays

Of Greece, whilst to the inauspicious sound
Of flutes and oaten pipes your oars kept time,
With all your streamers flying, proudly sail'd
To sacred Ilium, to the ports of Troy
Bringing the hated wife of Menelaus,
A foul disgrace to Castor, and a stain
Dishonouring Eurotas: she hath slain
Priam, the reverend sire of fifty children,
And in this gulf of misery hath plung'd
The wretched Hecuba: my seat is now,
Ah, what a seat? at Agamemnon's tent;
And I am led, in my old age am led
A captive from my house, of its hoar hairs,
Sad argument of grief, this head despoil'd.
But, O ye wretched wives of Trojans once
Valiant in war; ye virgins, and ye brides
Torn from your loves, Troy smokes: let us lament:
And, as the parent bird that o'er her young
Swells her shrill notes, I will begin the strain,
Not such as in my happier days I rais'd,
Leaning on Priam's sceptre, when my foot
In Phrygian measures, by the Graces taught,
Led to th' immortal gods the festive dance.

HECUBA, CHORUS.

- CHOR. Why, Hecuba, these cries, these cries of woe?
Why dost thou raise these loud laments? I hear
The wailings, which thou utterest, o'er these roofs
Resound; and terror strikes each Trojan dame,
That in this tent bemoans her slavery.
- HEC. O children, in the vessels of the Greeks
The hand now grasps the oar. O wretched me,
What will they do? Will they with spreading sails
Far from my country bear my hapless age?
- CHOR. I know not; but my mind presages ill.
Alas, alas, distracted with our woes,
Soon we shall hear, "Ye Trojan dames, come forth.
"The Grecians are preparing their return."

HEC. Ah, send not now the mad Cassandra to me,
That shame to Greece : her ravings to my woe
Would add fresh woe. O Troy, unhappy Troy,
Thou art no more. Unhappy they who leave thee,
Unhappy are the living, and the slain.

CHOR. Ah me, with trembling foot I leave the tent
Of Agamemnon, from thee, queen, to learn
Whether the sentence of the Greeks be pass'd,
To kill me, wretched me ; or in the ships
The sailors are prepar'd to plough the main.

HEC. Early, my child, my soul with terror struck,
Was I brought hither : from the Grecians now
An herald comes informing me to whom
I am assign'd, ah wretched me ! a slave.

CHOR. Soon will thy lot be cast.

HEC. Ah me ! Ah me !

CHOR. Me, miserable me, what Argive leads,
Or who of Phthia's vales, or of the isles
Encircled by the ocean, far from Troy ?

HEC. To whom am I, unhappy, in what land
Assign'd a slave, useless, worn out with age,
The wretched form of one that is no more,
A lifeless image on a monument ?
To keep their gates will they assign my charge ?
Or on their children shall my office be
T' attend, at Troy with royal honours grac'd ?

CHOR. Ah, with what complaints thy miseries dost thou scan ?

HEC. No more these hands in the Idæan looms
The shuttle with alternate cast shall throw :
No more my children's sportive youth I see ;
Nor, as in youth, shall I to lighter toils
Be destin'd, or approach some Grecian's bed :
The night itself, and fortune cheerless frowns.
But at Pirene's fount shall be my task,
My wretched task, to draw its sacred streams.

CHOR. Oh, to that happy country might we come,

O'er which th' illustrious Theseus held his reign !

HEC. But never to Therapnæ, hated town
Of Helen, seated where Eurotas whirls
His eddying stream ; expos'd my servile state
To Menelaus, who wasted sacred Troy.
The lovely tract, through which Penæus flows,
Delightful base, from which his awful height
Olympus rears, in wealth, so fame reports,
Abounds, and boasts its blooming fruitfulness.
This, next the honour'd and divine domains
Where Theseus reign'd, would be most pleasing to me.
Much have I heard of the Ætnæan coast
Sacred to Vulcan, to the Punic shore
That rises opposite, the mighty mother
Of the Sicilian mountains, where the wreath
Blooms ever fresh ; and of the neighbouring land,
Sweet habitation in th' Ionian sea,
Irriguous with the beauteous-flowing stream
Of Crathis, which the yellow tresses gilds,
And blessings from its sacred fountains pours
Through a rich land, that boasts a generous race.

CHOR. But from the Grecian host an herald comes,
Fraught with fresh tidings : hasty is his step.
What brings he ? what announces ? for in truth
We of the Dorian land e'en now are slaves.

TALTHYBIUS, HECUBA, CHORUS.

TALT. Thou, Hecuba, hast seen Talthybius oft
In Troy, an herald from the Grecian host
In frequent intercourse : but now to thee,
In past time not unknown, I come, and bring
The public mandate, which concerns you all.

222. Many authors mention this quality of the river Crathis, which changes the hair of those that bathe in it to the colour of amber : hence Ovid,

Electro similes faciunt auroque capillos. Met. l. xv. v. 316.

With gold and amber dye the shining hair. *Dryden.*

HEC. This, this, my friends, ye dames of Troy, long since
This was my fear.

TALT. You are by lot assign'd,
If this was what you fear'd.

HEC. Alas, alas!
To what Thessalian, or what Phthian town,
Or to Cadmæan Thebes? I pray thee tell me.

TALT. Singly to single chiefs are you allotted,
And not together all.

HEC. To whom, to whom
Am I appointed, say. What happy fate
Awaits each Trojan dame?

TALT. I can inform thee:
But singly ask of each, not all at once.

HEC. The poor Cassandra, my unhappy daughter,
Where falls her lot?

TALT. Her, a selected prize,
The royal Agamemnon hath receiv'd.

HEC. What! for his Spartan spouse a slave? Ah me!

TALT. No: but in secret to the nuptial bed.

HEC. The virgin of Apollo, whom the god
Radiant with golden locks allow'd to live
In her pure vow of maiden chastity!

TALT. With love the raptur'd virgin smote his heart.

HEC. Cast from thee, O my daughter, cast away
Thy sacred wand, rend off the honour'd wreaths,
The splendid ornaments that grace thy brows.

TALT. Is it not great to share a monarch's bed?

HEC. But where is she, whom late you took from me,
Where is my daughter?

TALT. Of Polyxena,
Or of whom else is this enquiry made?

HEC. To whom is she allotted?

TALT. At the tomb
Rais'd to Achilles it is hers to serve.

HEC. Unhappy me! Have I brought forth a child
Doom'd at a tomb to serve? But tell me, friend,

What custom, or what rite of Greece is this?

TALT. Pronounce her happy: all with her is well.

HEC. What mean thy words? View'st she the sun's bright beams?

TALT. Her doth fate hold from every ill releas'd.

HEC. What of Andromache, the wretched wife
Of helmed Hector? Tell me what her fate?

TALT. Her without lot Achilles' son receives.

HEC. And I, whose age-enfeebled limbs require
A staff, to whom am I assign'd a slave?

TALT. Thee hath Ulysses, king of Ithaca,
By lot obtain'd: to him thou art a slave.

HEC. Ah, let me beat this head, and rend these cheeks.
O miserable me! I am enslav'd
To a detested, an insidious foe,
A creeping viper, who with baleful bite
Impoisons justice; one, whose double tongue
With glozing arguments from side to side
All things perverts, and turns to hostile hate
What was before most friendly. Mourn for me,
Ye Trojan dames, for I am wretched, sunk
To the most abject fortune, woe is me,
Totally sunk by this ill-fated lot.

CHOR. Thy fortune, venerable queen, I know:
But mine what Argive, or what Greek commands?

TALT. Go, ye attendants; with what speed you may
Conduct Cassandra hither: I must give her
To the king's hand; the other captives then,
Each as allotted, lead to their new lords.—
But what is this? Why flames the blazing torch
Within? What mean these Trojan dames? to fire
The inmost tent? that, since the hour draws nigh
When from this land they must perforce be borne
To Argos, they may perish in the flames,
Seeking to die: ill brooks th' excessive love
Of freedom woes like these. Open these doors,

265. Talthybius, through tenderness, expresses himself with regard to this unfortunate princess with a studied ambiguity, which Hecuba does not understand.

Open, lest what to these may give delight,
And grief to Greece, may to my blame be charg'd.

HEC. It is not so ; they raise no flames ; but forth
My frenetic child, Cassandra, rushes to us.

CASSANDRA, HECUBA, TALTHYBIUS, CHORUS.

CASS. Wave the torch, and spread its light ;
Thus I bear it blazing bright,
Rev'rence, and illume the shrine ;
Royal Hymen, it is thine.
See, the happy bridegroom see,
And the happy bride in me :
At Argos I shall mount the nuptial bed,
Royal Hymen, by thee led.
Since thy tears, my mother, flow,
And thy heart is rent with woe,
For my slaughter'd father's fate,
And my country's ruin'd state,
At my spousals I will raise
A fire shall shine, shall flame, shall blaze,
And, royal Hymen, on the bridal night
Give to Hecate the light,
For a virgin's nuptial bands ;
Sacred custom this demands.
Nimbly let your feet advance,
Quiv'ring high in festive dance,
As if Priam's prosp'rous throne
Bright with royal splendors shone.
The choir is hallow'd : with them, Phœbus, move :
In thy sacred laurel grove
Off'rings at thy shrine I lay :
Hymen, 'tis my bridal day.
Lead the dance, my mother, lead,
Quick in varying motions tread,
And, my gliding steps to grace,
Light the mazy measure trace.
To royal Hymen raise, O hallow'd train,
Raise the joy-announcing strain ;

Hail the bride with songs of joy,
Gorgeous-vested nymphs of Troy;
Hail the bridegroom, to my bed
By the Fates' appointment led.

CHOR. Wilt thou not, queen, thy raving daughter hold,
That she appear not 'midst the host of Greece
Possess'd with this indecent levity?

HEC. O Vulcan, thou indeed the nuptial torch
Of mortals bearest, but a baleful flame
Dost thou now wave, and void of each fond hope.
Alas, my daughter, little did I think
That ever thou shou'dst wed beneath the spear,
Beneath the arms of Greece! Give me the torch;
Ill it besseems thee frenetic thus, with step
Thus wild, to bear its flame: nor to thy mind
Have thy misfortunes brought more sober sense;
But, my poor child, thy state remains the same.
Bear in the torches; and, ye Trojan dames,
For tears exchange her nuptial melody.

CASS. Mother, adorn my head; for I have gain'd
A conquest; in my nuptials with a king
Rejoice: come, lead me; if I go too slow,
Push me by force; for this is not Apollo.
Th' illustrious Agamemnon, king of Greece,
Weds me; but in these nuptials he shall find
More woe than Paris when he wedded Helen;
For I will kill him, and lay waste his house;
Thus for my brothers' and my father's death
I will have vengeance: but no words of this:
I will say nothing of the axe, which goes
Into my neck, and that of others too:
Nor of the contest where a mother bleeds;
(This shall my nuptials raise;) nor of the house
Of Atreus sunk in ruins: I will shew
This city than the Grecians far more blest:
(I feel th' inspiring god, but will awhile
Bid the prophetic fury cease to swell:)
They for one woman, and one fatal bed

Sought Helen, and lost thousands; their wise chief
Himself, to gain what most the soul abhors,
Hath thrown away what most it loves, and giv'n
The sweet domestic pleasures of his children,
To win his brother's wife; yet was she borne
Consentingly, not forcibly away.
When to Scamander's banks they came, they died;
Nor from their country, or its high-tow'r'd towns,
Werethey driv'n forth: those, whom the sword destroy'd,
Their children saw no more, nor were their limbs
By their wives' hands in decent vestments wrapt,
But in a foreign land they lie. At home
Like desolation reigns: their widow'd wives
Are dead: their parents, childless, have in vain
Rear'd offspring in their houses; not a son
Survives to pour libations at their tombs.
Such are the triumphs of this martial host.
Deeds of impurity are better hush'd
In silence: never Muse be mine, to chaunt
What raises on the modest cheek a blush.
The Trojans, what is glory's brightest grace,
Died for their country: they, beneath the spear
Who fell, were by their friends borne home, and dead
Found in their native land a sepulchre,
Entomb'd by those from whom those rites were due.
But such, as fell not in the field, each day
Dwelt with their wives and children; whilst the Greeks
Were strangers to that sweet society.
Mournful the fate of Hector seems to thee:
But weigh it well: he dies, among the brave
Esteem'd the bravest;—this high fame the Greeks
By their arrival rais'd; had they not come,
The hero's virtues had remain'd obscure.
Paris espous'd the daughter of high Jove;
Had she not been his bride, he would at home
Have form'd some mean alliance, unrenown'd.
War then the man, whom prudence rules, will shun:
But if its flames are kindled, no mean crown

He wins, who bravely for his country dies :
 Not to act bravely is inglorious shame.
 Therefore behoves thee, mother, not to wail
 Thy country, or my bed ; for those, to thee
 Whose deeds have been most hostile, and to me,
 I by my nuptials to the dust will bow.

CHOR. How sweetly at thy house's ills thou smilest,
 Chaunting what haply thou wilt not shew true !

TALT. But that Apollo hath with frenzy hurt
 Thy sense, unpunish'd with such taunting speech
 Thou shou'dst not from this country send the chiefs.
 But what commands respect, and is held high
 As wise, is nothing better than the mean
 Of no repute : for this most potent king
 Of all the Grecians, the much honour'd son
 Of Atreus, is enamour'd with his prize,
 This frenetic raver. I am a poor man,
 Yet would I not receive her to my bed.
 For thee, since thou hast not thy perfect sense,
 All thy reproaches on the Greeks and all
 Thy praises of the Trojans, to the winds
 I give to scatter them. But to the ships
 Attend me, beauteous minion of our chief.
 Thou, since Ulysses wills to lead thee with him,
 Follow ; a virtuous lady shalt thou serve,
 As they, who came to Ilium, speak her fame.

CASS. This is a busy slave. What one name suits
 All heralds ? The abhorrence of mankind,
 Ye ministers of tyrants and of states.
 And dost thou say that to Ulysses' house
 My mother shall be led ? Where are the words
 Of Phœbus then, which say, by me made known,
 Here she shall die ? The rest revile I not :
 But he, unhappy, knows not what a train
 Of suff'rings waits him, so that he shall deem
 Mine and the Phrygians' ills, with his compar'd,
 Treasures of gold : for after ten long years
 To ten long years here wasted, he shall reach

His native land alone ; but visit first
The straits, amidst whose gulfs, that now disgorge
And now resorb the floods, Charybdis holds
Her terrible abode ; the blood-stain'd cave
Of the huge Cyclops, mountain savage, gorg'd
With flesh where life yet quivers ; Circe's isle,
Whose charmed cup transforms whoever taste
To swine ; tempestuous seas with wrecks o'erspread ;
Men in the flow'ry Lotus who delight ;
The sacred heifers of the sun, whose flesh
Shall send forth lowings, to Ulysses sound
Of horror : to be brief, to Pluto's realms
Alive shall he descend : and from the waves
Escap'd, returning to his country find
A thousand ills. But why repeat the toils
That wait Ulysses ? Go, that I with speed
May wed a bridegroom in the shades below.
Thou, who in thought some glorious deed art now
Achieving, leader of the Grecian host,
Wretch, shalt be buried wretchedly by night,
Not in the day : and me, a livid corse,
Naked, cast out, the torrent floods shall leave
In their rough channels, nigh my bridegroom's tomb,
A prey to beasts, this priestess of Apollo.
Ye garlands of the god, most dear to me,
Prophetic ornaments, farewell : the feasts,
In which I once delighted, are to me
No more ; be gone ; I rend you from me ; while
I yet am chaste, I give them to the winds,
To toss, to scatter them, prophetic king !
Where is the leader's bark ? How shall my foot
Mount its tall sides ? No longer shall thy sails
Wait for the breathing gales ; but thou shalt bear me
A Fury, an Erinny, from this land.
Farewell, my mother ; do not shed a tear.

449. For the sufferings of Ulysses, and the specious miracles here alluded to, see the *Odyssey* at large.

O my lov'd country, O my brothers, sunk
To the dark realms below, O father, soon
Shall you receive me; to your shades I come
Triumphant from the ruin of the house
Of Atreus, by whose sons we thus are fall'n!

HECUBA, CHORUS.

CHOR. Ye, who attend the aged Hecuba,
Behold you not the queen, how to the ground
Speechless she sinks? Shall not your hands with care
Support her? Wretches, will you let her age
Lie on the earth? Haste, raise her, upright raise her.

HEC. Forbear, ye virgins; what was pleasing once
Pleases no more: here let me lie thus fall'n,
A fall that suits what I have suffer'd, what
I suffer, and shall suffer. O ye gods,
Unkind associates I indeed invoke,
Yet when affliction rends the anguish'd heart,
We with becoming grace invoke the gods.
First it is pleasing to me to recount
My happier fortunes; thus my woes shall raise
A stronger pity. Royal was my birth,
And marriage join'd me to a royal house;
There I was mother of illustrious sons,
Sons with superior excellence adorn'd
Above the Phrygians; such no Trojan dame,
No Grecian, no Barbarian e'er could boast:
These I saw fall'n beneath the Grecian spear,
And laid my sever'd tresses on their tomb.
For Priam too, their father, flow'd my tears;
His fate I heard not from report, but saw it,
These eyes beheld him murder'd at the altar
Of guardian Jove; my vanquish'd city storm'd;
My daughters, whom I nurtur'd high in hope
Of choosing honourable nuptials for them,
For others nurtur'd from my hands are rent;
There is no hope that me they e'er shall see,
And I shall never see them more. Th' extreme,

'The height of my afflicting ills is this,
 I to some house shall go, an hoary slave,
 To some base task, most irksome to my age,
 Assign'd; or at their doors to keep the keys
 A portress shall I wait, the mother once
 Of Hector, or to labour at the mill;
 For royal couches, on the ground to make
 My rugged bed; and o'er these worn-out limbs
 The tatter'd remnant of a worn-out robe,
 Unseemly to my happier state, to throw.
 Ah, for one woman's nuptial bed, what woes
 Are mine, and will be mine! Alas, my child,
 My poor Cassandra, madd'ning with the gods,
 By what misfortunes is thy purity
 Defil'd? And where art thou, Polyxena,
 O thou unhappy! Thus of all my sons,
 And all my daughters, many though they were,
 Not one is left to sooth my miseries.
 Why do you raise me, virgins? With what hope
 Lead you this foot, which once with stately port
 In Troy advanc'd, but now a slave, to seek
 A bed of leaves strewn on the ground, a stone
 My pillow, there to lie, to perish there
 Wasted with tears? Then deem not of the great
 Now flourishing as happy, e'er they die.

CHORUS.

STRO. For Troy, O Muse, attune thy woe,
 And steep in tears the solemn-breathing song;
 To such a theme such notes belong:
 For Troy unwonted measures now shall flow,
 Shall tell my sorrows, how beneath
 The guileful fabric, big with death,
 I fell a captive to the Argive spear:
 When from th' enormous beast, that hides
 An host within its cavern'd sides,
 With golden trappings hung around,
 Roll'd to the gates with thund'ring sound,

Issuing in arms the chiefs of Greece appear.
 But from the rock of Ilium high
 With shouts the blinded Phrygians cry,
 "Go, from your toils releas'd, ye sons of Troy.

"This hallow'd fabric draw with joy :
 "To Jove-born Pallas place the pledge divine
 "In favour'd Ilium's rampir'd shrine."
 The young, the old promiscuous throng,
 And roll with songs of joy the fraudulent pest along.

ANTIS. From every street with eager pace,
 The pines of Ida flaming in their hands,
 Rush to the gates the Trojan bands,
 To Pallas in her favour'd tow'r to place
 The fabric form'd with Argive wiles,
 The pest which Phrygia's state beguiles,
 The heav'n-fram'd present of the unyok'd steed :
 With twisted cables thrown around
 They drag it o'er the fatal ground,
 Like a new bark in gallant state,
 To Pallas in her rocky seat.
 To toil and joy the shades of night succeed :
 The Libyan pipe swells clear and high;
 Attuned to Phrygian melody;
 To the light notes in many an airy round
 The frolic virgins nimbly bound,
 And joyful as they dance their voices raise,
 Sweet warbling spritely-fancied lays.
 In every house the blazing fires
 Sink at the hour of rest, and their swart light expires.

EPOD. Then too my vaulted roofs around
 The voice of joy was heard to sound ;
 We to Diana rais'd the strain,
 Chaste huntress-queen that leads the mountain train.
 Sudden a wild tumultuous roar
 With shudd'ring horror strikes our souls :
 Loud and more loud the city o'er
 To Pergamus it deep'ning rolls :
 My dear, dear infants round their mother prest,

And grasp'd with trembling hands my vest.
 Now, by Minerva's guardian care,
 Rush'd from its ambush the imprison'd war:
 Round the polluted altars slain
 In blood are roll'd the sons of Troy:
 O'er the rich rooms, once scenes of joy,
 Horror and desolation reign,
 And bear to Greece, her victor sons t' adorn,
 The crown from weeping Phrygia borne.

HECUBA, ANDROMACHE, CHORUS.

- CHOR. See, royal lady, on this foreign car
 Andromache is borne; and at her breast,
 Which trembles to the motion of the wheels,
 Astyanax, the son of Hector, laid.
- HEC. Whither, unhappy woman, art thou borne,
 Plac'd in that car beside the brazen arms
 Of Hector, and the spoils by the strong spear
 Rent from the Phrygians? Distant far from Troy
 In Phthia these the proud son of Achilles
 Shall hang, to crown the temples of the gods.
- ANDR. My Grecian lords force me away.
- HEC. Ah me!
- ANDR. Why dost thou heave my sighs?
- HEC. Ah wretched me!
- ANDR. That for my sorrows,
- HEC. Seest thou this, O Jove!
- ANDR. And my distresses rise.
- HEC. Alas, my children!
- ANDR. We were thy children once.
- HEC. My state is fall'n;
 Troy too is fall'n.
- ANDR. Unhappy!
- HEC. And my sons,
 My noble sons are fall'n.
- ANDR. Alas, alas!
- HEC. Alas my ills, the miserable fate
- ANDR. Of ruin'd Troy,

HEC. Which smokes upon the ground.

ANDR. Oh, wou'dst thou come, my husband !

HEC. Thou dost call

My son, unhappy, in the realms below.

ANDR. Thou bulwark of thy wife !

HEC. And thou, whose soul

Swell'd high against the Grecians, Priam, once

The aged father of my children, lead,

O lead me to the gloomy realms below !

CHOR. These griefs are great.

HEC. And dreadful are the ills

We suffer.

CHOR. For thy ruin'd country : woes,

Such is the pleasure of the gods, succeed

To woes. Nor hath thy son escap'd from death,

Who for a bed abhorr'd hath sunk in dust

The tow'rs of Troy, and near the rampir'd rock

Of Pallas stretch'd the bodies of the slain,

Welt'ring in blood, by vultures to be torn :

And Troy is bow'd beneath the servile yoke.

HEC. My country, my unhappy country, thee

Wasted I weep.

CHOR. Thou seest its wretched end.

HEC. And thee my house, where oft I was a mother.

CHOR. Unhappy children, wasted is your town,

Your mother desolate.

HEC. What strains are these,

What strains of woe ! Tears after tears stream down

In sorrow for my house : the dead forgets

His sorrows, and his tears stream down no more.

CHOR. How sweet are tears to those who suffer ills ?

Sweet are the strains of lamentation, sweet

The mournful Muse that tunes her notes to woe.

ANDR. Mother of Hector, that brave chief, whose spear

Once pierc'd the Grecian squadrons, seest thou this ?

HEC. I see th' appointment of the gods ; the low

How they exalt, and hurl the mighty down.

ANDR. I, with my child, am led away, the spoil

Of war: th' illustrious progeny of kings,
O fatal change, is sunk to slavery.

HEC. Necessity is rig'rous: from me late
Cassandra went, torn from my arms by force.

ANDR. Alas! another Ajax then, it seems,
Thy daughter finds: but thou hast other ills.

HEC. Unmeasur'd and unnumber'd are my ills:
Afflictions with afflictions still contend.

ANDR. Polyxena, thy daughter, is no more:

Devoted to Achilles, on his tomb
An off'ring to the lifeless dead she fell.

HEC. Ah wretched me! This was the dread event
Talthybius hinted to me in dark terms.

ANDR. I saw her, and descending from this car
Wrapt the vests round her, and bewail'd her dead.

HEC. Alas, my daughter, what unhallow'd rites?
Alas, alas! unseemly hast thou perish'd.

ANDR. She perish'd, as she perish'd: but her fate
In death is happier far than mine who live.

HEC. 'Tis not one thing, my child, to live or die:
The living Hopes await, the dead are nothing.

ANDR. Hear, that with pleasure I may touch thy soul.

Not to be born, I argue, and to die,
Are equal: but to die is better far
Than to live wretched; for he knows not grief,
Who hath no sense of misery: but to fall
From fortune's blessed height, to the low state
Of abject wretchedness, distracts the soul
With the keen sense of former happiness.
Like as the light of life she ne'er had seen,
Polyxena is dead, and of her ills

Knows nothing: I, who aim'd at glorious rank,
And reach'd my aim, from fortune widely err'd:
All, that to prudent matrons gives a grace,
In Hector's house was ever my employ.
First, for in this to women blame is due,
Charg'd or not charg'd, to such as rove abroad,
I check'd this wand'ring humour, and remain'd

At home, within my house; nor gay discourse
Of females there admitted, but intent
On ordering what was useful, deem'd myself
Well occupied: with silence of the tongue
And cheerfulness of look I entertain'd
My husband: where my province to command
I knew, and where to yield obedience to him.
The fame of this was bruited through the host
Of Greece, and wrought my ruin; for the son
Of fierce Achilles, soon as I was made
A captive, wish'd to take me as his wife,
Doom'd in the house of those, whose slaught'ring hands
I rue, to be a slave. From my fond heart
Could I rend Hector, and expand my breast
To this new husband, faithless to the dead
Should I appear: if I disdain his love,
I shall excite the malice of my lords.
Short time, they say, to a new lord disarms
A woman's hate: but her my soul abhors,
Who for new nuptials slights her former husband,
And loves another: e'en the social steed,
Divided from its fellow, draws the yoke
Reluctant; yet the beast, by nature form'd
Less excellent, nor speech nor reason knows.
O my lov'd Hector, I was blest in thee,
Thou wast the lord of all my wishes, great
In understanding, noble birth, and wealth,
And valour: from my father's house thou first
Ledd'st me a virgin to the bridal bed:
Now thou art perish'd, and I mount the bark
For Greece, a captive to the servile yoke.
Hath not the death then of Polyxena,
Whom thou bewailest, lighter ills than mine!
For not to me e'en Hope, which still is left
To all of mortal race, remains; no thought
That better fortune e'er will visit me
With pleasing expectation cheats my mind.

CHOR. Alike our suff'rings; and thou teachest me,

Thine own ills wailing, my unhappy state.
HEC. I never enter'd bark; my knowledge springs
 From what in picture I have seen, or heard
 From others. When a storm, whose moderate force
 May be sustain'd, the curling billows swells,
 With prompt alacrity the sailors toil
 To guide the vessel safe; one at the helm
 His station takes, one tends the sails, one plies
 The pump: but if the wild tempestuous sea
 Mocks their vain efforts, they to fortune yield,
 And leave her to the rolling of the waves.
 So fares it now with me: with various ills
 Encompass'd I am silent, give them way,
 And check my vain complaints; for from the gods
 This cruel storm o'erpow'rs me. But do thou,
 O my lov'd child, on Hector's fate no more
 Fix thy sad thoughts; not all thy streaming tears
 Will save him: honour then thy present lord,
 And with thy gentle manners win his soul;
 This doing, thou shalt cheer thy friends, and train
 This child, my Hector's son, to manhood, strong
 To succour Troy; that sons from him may spring,
 Who shall again the tow'rs of Ilium raise,
 And once more to its state restore the town.
 But trouble yet perchance from trouble springs;
 This Grecian officer I see again
 Advancing to us, bearing new commands.

**TALTHYBIUS, HECUBA, ANDROMACHE,
 CHORUS.**

TALT. Thou wife of Hector, of the Phrygians once
 The bravest, do not hate me: for my tongue
 Unwillingly will utter what the Greeks
 Decree, and the Pelopidæ command.
ANDR. Why with this tragic proem dost thou greet me?
TALT. It is decreed thy son—How shall I speak it!
ANDR. What? that he have not the same lord with me?
TALT. None of the Grecians e'er shall be his lord.

ANDR. To leave him here, a relick of the Trojans?

TALT. I cannot utter, but with pain, thy ills.

ANDR. I praise thy modest awe, speak thou but good.

TALT. This great ill thou must know: they slay thy son.

ANDR. This than my marriage is a greater ill.

TALT. Ulysses 'midst th' assembled Greeks prevails.

ANDR. Ah, these are ills too grievous to be borne.

TALT. Not to bring up a valiant warrior's son.

ANDR. Thus for his own sons may his voice prevail!

TALT. But that they cast him from the tow'rs of Troy.

In this sad trial be thy prudence shewn:

Withhold him not, with noble fortitude

Support thy griefs: nor think that thou hast pow'r,

Where all thou canst is nothing: thou canst find

No succour: it behoves thee weigh this well.

Low lies thy city, low thy husband lies,

Thou art a captive: we have force enough

Against one woman: wish not then to strive;

Let no indecent, no despiteful deed

Dishonour thee; nor would I have thee vent

Thy curses on the Greeks; for shou'dst thou speak

What shall disgust the troops, thy son perchance

May lie unpitied, and denied the rites

Of sepulture: but if thou bear thine ills

In silence and with fortitude, his corse

Will not be left unburied, and thyself

Wilt from the Grecians find more courtesy.

ANDR. O my dear child, my fondly cherish'd son,

Thou by the foes shalt die, ah me! and leave

Thy wretched mother. Yes, thy father's worth

Shall kill thee, which to others is a shield

Yielding protection: in an evil hour

For thee thy father's virtues are renown'd.

O my unhappy bed, and nuptial rites,

Which led me to the house of Hector, there

Not to be mother of a son to fall

A victim by the Grecians, but to reign

Lord of the fruitful Asia! Dost thou weep,

My son? Hast thou a sense of thy ill fate?
Why dost thou clasp me with thy hands, why hold
My robes, and shelter thee beneath my wings
Like a young bird? No more my Hector comes
Returning from the tomb, he grasps no more
His glitt'ring spear, bringing protection to thee:
No more thy father's kindred, or the force
Of the brave Phrygians: but from Ilium's height,
By merciless hands hurl'd headlong, shalt thou fall,
And crush'd breathe out thy life. O soft embrace,
And to thy mother dear! O fragrant breath!
In vain I swath'd thy infant limbs, in vain
I gave thee nurture at this breast, and toil'd
Wasted with care. If ever, now embrace,
Now clasp thy mother, throw thine arms around
My neck, and join thy cheek, thy lips to mine.
Why, O ye Grecians, studying barb'rous ills,
Why will you kill my son? He hath not wrong'd you.
Daughter of Tyndarus, but not of Jove,
From many fathers must I deem thee sprung,
From Vengeance first, then Hate, from Slaughter, Death,
And all the ills earth breeds: for ne'er from Jove
Durst I pronounce thy birth: Thou fatal pest
To many Phrygians, and to many Greeks,
Perdition seize thee; by thy beauteous eyes
Thou vilely hast destroy'd the realms of Troy.
Here, take him, bear him, hurl him from the height,
If ye must hurl him, feast upon his flesh:
For from the gods hath ruin fall'n on us:
We have no pow'r to save my child from death.
Cover this wretched body, wrap it close,
Cast it into your galley; for I come
To glorious nuptials, having lost my son.

CHOR. Unhappy Troy, what numbers hast thou lost,
Through one vile woman, and her hateful bed!

ANDR. Forbear, my son, forbear thy fond embrace
Of thy afflicted mother: go, ascend
The summit of those tow'rs, thy father's once,

There leave thy life, for so hath Greece decreed.
 Take him: fit herald of this deed is he,
 Who knows no touch of pity or of shame,
 But rather to your mandate gives assent.

HEC. O child, O son of my unhappy son,
 We of thy life, beyond our thoughts, are reft,
 I, and thy mother! What can I, poor boy.
 What can I do for thee, but smite this head,
 And beat this breast? That we can give thee, that
 Is in our pow'r. Ah me, what griefs for Troy
 I suffer, what for thee? Is there an ill
 We have not? What is wanting to the woes,
 Which all the dreadful band of Ruin brings?

HECUBA, CHORUS.

CHORUS.

STRO. 1. Thou lord of Salamis, where love
 The honey-gath'ring bees to rove,
 Thou, who didst hold thy island-seat
 Around whose rocks the billows beat,
 Whose hallow'd mounds first boast to shew
 Rang'd down their sloping sides the olive bough,
 Of blue-eyed Pallas heav'nly crown,
 And glory of her polish'd town:
 Thou with Alcmena's son, whose hand
 Grasp'd the strong bow, held'st high command.
 Thy soul, like his, to glorious action bold,
 To Troy, O Telamon, to Troy,
 Our rampir'd city to destroy,
 Thou cam'st, from Greece thou cam'et in times of old.

ANTIS. 1. When, raging for the steeds denied,
 Of Greece he led the blooming pride;
 Where Simois pours his beauteous flood
 'Till hero's barks at anchor stood;
 Dauntless he leap'd upon the strand,
 His bow and arrows grasping in his hand:
 Laomedon with wild affright
 Mark'd how they wing'd their slaught'ring flight.

Though Phœbus squar'd each polish'd stone,
 The high-rais'd rampires are o'erthrown;
 Around the ruddy flames devouring rise,
 And Troy an heap of ruin lies:
 Twice rag'd the spear around her walls,
 And twice with thund'ring sound the city falls.

STRO. 2. In vain then at the golden bowls of Jove
 Hast thou thy honour'd place,
 Thy steps compos'd with sweetest grace,
 Presenting at the feast divine
 To heav'n's high king the sparkling wine;
 Vain, Dardan boy, thy glorious charge above;
 For war and wasting flames destroy
 Sunk to the ground thy native Troy.
 The sea-wash'd shores around
 Loud cries and shrieks resound,
 As for her young when the poor bird complains,
 And anguish swells her strains:
 Their husbands some, and some their sons deplore,
 Their mothers some, with age that bow,
 Lament with pious woe.
 Thy brimmed baths are now no more,
 A silent waste the circus lies,
 Once thy lov'd scene of manly exercise,
 But thou the throne of Jove beside,
 Blooming in all youth's roscate pride,
 Sweetly ærene dost woo each grace
 To give new beauties to thy face:
 Yet Priam's realms lie waste, a desert drear,
 Beneath the Grecian spear.

ANTIS. 2. O Love, O Love, that to the seats of Troy,
 Thy gently-glowing fire
 Kindling in heav'nly breasts desire,
 Didst once direct thy pleasing flight,
 To what a splendid, stately height,
 Whilst gods her dear alliance sought with joy,
 Didst thou exalt her glorious fame?
 Now must thou bear another name;

No more joy-kindling Love,
 But the reproach of Jove.
 This fatal morn, with silver-waving wings
 Which light to mortals brings,
 Hath seen destruction wide its ravage spread,
 Hath seen the tow'rs of Troy laid low
 Beneath th' insulting foe:
 With offspring yet to bless her bed
 Her husband from this land she bore;
 The favour'd youth yon orient regions o'er
 Her four ethereal coursers bear,
 Plac'd by her in her golden car.
 Hence to thy country Hope might rise,
 Grac'd with the favour of the skies:
 But all the love, which touch'd the gods with joy,
 Shrinks from the aid of Troy.

MENELAUS, HECUBA, CHORUS.

MEN. O thou bright-beaming radiance of this sun,
 Helen in thee, my wife, these hands shall seize,
 After the many toils I have sustain'd,
 I, and the Grecian host. I came to Troy,
 Not for a woman, as some lightly think,
 But arm'd with vengeance 'gainst the man, who broke
 Each hospitable law, and from my house
 Bore, as his spoil, my wife. But the just gods
 He hath his meed, he and his country fall'n
 Beneath the arms of Greece. The Spartan dame,
 For not with pleasure can my tongue pronounce
 Her name who was my wife, once was, I come
 To lead from hence: for in this tent, among
 The other captive dames of Troy enroll'd,
 Is she detain'd: for they, whose toiling spear
 Achiev'd her, have presented her to me
 To kill her, or, if such my will, to Greece
 Alive to lead her: but my purpose is
 The death of Helen to forbear at Troy,
 And bear her in my stout bark o'er the seas

To Greece; and there, in vengeance for my friends
Who beneath Ilium died, to give her death.

But, ye attendants, go into the tent,
Bring her forth, drag her by the hair with blood
Deeply polluted: when the fav'ring winds
Breathe in our sails, to Greece shall she be sent.

HEC. O Jove, who rulest the rolling of the earth,
And o'er it hast thy throne, whoe'er thou art,
The ruling mind, or the necessity
Of nature, I adore thee: dark thy ways
And silent are thy steps; to mortal man
Yet thou with justice all things dost ordain.

MEN. Why to the gods dost thou renew thy vows?

HEC. I praise thy resolution, Menelaus,
If thou shalt kill thy wife: but fly her sight,
She captivates the eyes of men, takes towns,
Sets houses all on fire; such blandishments
She hath t' allure the soul; I know her well,
Thou know'st her, and all they that suffer by her.

HELENA, MENELAUS, HECUBA, CHORUS.

HEL. This is a prelude which may well cause fear;
For by thy servants, Menelaus, by force
I from the tent am dragg'd. But little wants
T' assure me that I am detested by thee.
Yet I would ask thee, by the states of Greece
And thee touching my life what is decreed.

MEN. Justice hath not pronounc'd fix'd sentence on thee:
But all the host of Greece, whom thou hast wrong'd,
Give thee to me, and thou by me shalt die.

HEL. May I have leave 'gainst this to urge my plea,
That, if I die, not justly I shall die?

MEN. Not to hold converse came I, but to kill thee.

HEC. Yet hear her, Menelaus, nor let her die,
Her bland excuse not urg'd: but to her plea
Let me reply; for of the ills in Troy
Thou nothing know'st; but when I sum them all,
From death no refuge shall be left to her.

- MEN. This requires leisure; yet if she would speak,
 She is allow'd: but let her know thy words
 Gain her this leave; no grace to her I grant.
- HEL. Let me or well or ill appear to speak,
 * Thou no reply wilt haply deign me, deem'd * to Menelaus.
 An enemy: yet to the crime, of which
 I know † thou wilt accuse me, I will make † to Hecuba.
 Reply, and to thy charge my pleas oppose,
 'Gainst thee my charge. She first, then, to these ills
 Gave birth, when she gave Paris birth; and next
 The aged Priam ruin'd Troy and thee,
 The infant not destroying, at his birth
 Denounc'd a baleful firebrand. Hear from thence
 What follow'd. 'Twixt the rival goddesses
 Paris was judge: from Pallas was his meed
 To lead the Phrygian arms, and conquer Greece:
 From Juno, if to her his voice adjudg'd
 The prize, to hold o'er Asia, and the bounds
 Of Europe his wide empire: but, my form
 Extolling, Venus promis'd to his arms
 To give me, if in beauty she surpass'd
 The other goddesses. Mark now th' event.
 The prize is giv'n to Venus; and so far
 My nuptials profit Greece, you are not fall'n
 Beneath Barbarians, or a tyrant's sway,
 Nor to protect your country, stand in arms.
 I, in what Greece is happy, am undone,
 Sold for my beauty, and with cruel taunts
 Revil'd for what my head deserves a crown.
 But thou wilt say that to an obvious charge
 I have not yet replied, that from thy house
 I fled by stealth: Her son, for ruin born,
 Or Paris call'd or Alexander, came,
 And brought no feeble goddess in his train:
 Him, thou most worthless, leaving in thy house,

994. This alludes to the dream of Hecuba, when pregnant with Paris, that she had brought forth a firebrand. The Prophets were consulted, and foretold that the child would prove the destruction of his country.

From Sparta didst thou hoist thy sails for Crete.
 Well: what ensued of thee I will not ask,
 But of myself: What could induce my thought,
 My country for a stranger, and my house
 Betray'd, to follow him? Thy vengeance rouse
 Against the goddess, and be thou than Jove
 More potent; he o'er other gods bears rule,
 But is her slave: I then may pardon find.
 But hence against me thou may'st urge a charge
 Of specious argument: When Paris died,
 And low in earth was laid, behov'd me then,
 Since by no god my nuptials then were wrought,
 To leave his house, and to the Grecian ships
 To come: On this I earnestly was bent;
 Witness, ye guards who kept the gates, and you,
 Who station'd on the walls held careful watch,
 How oft you found me from the battlements
 With ropes attempting to slide down by stealth:
 But this new husband seizing me by force,
 Deiphobus, the Trojans much averse,
 Held me his wife. How then can Justice doom me
 To die? With Justice how can I be slain
 By thee, my husband, since he wedded me
 By force? Thus from my house was I a slave
 Sold for the prize of conquest. If thou aim
 T' exceed the gods in pow'r, the thought is folly.

CHOR. Defend thy children, and thy country, queen;
 Refute her glozing speech: her words are fair,
 Her actions foul: in this much danger lies.

HEC. The goddesses my voice shall first defend,
 And shew that she unjustly charges blame
 On them. For Juno never will I deem,
 Or virgin Pallas, to such frenzy sunk,
 That Argos to Barbarians she would sell,
 Or Pallas to the Phrygians e'er enslave
 Her favour'd Athens, who in sportive mood

And dainty dalliance to Ida came,
For form contesting. Whence this strong desire
In royal Juno of superior charms?
Was it to win a greater lord than Jove?
Did Pallas, of her father who had ask'd
To keep her virgin purity unsoil'd,
Flying connubial rites, aim now t' obtain
The nuptials of some god? Forbear to charge
These goddesses with folly, to set off
Thy own misdeeds; no credence with the wise
Wilt thou acquire. But Venus, thou hast said,
(High subject this for laughter,) with my son
Came to the house of Menelaus: At rest
In heav'n remaining, could she not have brought her,
And e'en Amyclæ, had she pleas'd, to Troy?
My son was with surpassing beauty grac'd;
And thy fond passion, when he struck thy sight,
Became a Venus; for each foolish fondness
To mortals is a Venus, and the soul
Bereaves of reason: when thine eyes beheld him
Glitt'ring in rich barbaric vests and gold,
Thy passions were to madness soon inflam'd,
At Argos little hadst thou been with wealth
Acquainted; quitting Sparta, thou hadst hope
The Phrygian state, flowing with gold, would yield
Thy proud expense supplies; nor could the house
Of Menelaus within its narrow walls
Give thy insulting vanities free scope.
Well, let that pass: My son, thou say'st, by force
Bore thee away: What Spartan of that force
Was sensible? With what cries didst thou call
Castor, thy brother, to thy aid, then strong
In manhood's prime, then living, to the stars
Not then exalted? When thou camest to Troy,
And, following close, the Grecians, rag'd the spear

1070. Amyclæ, a town of Laconia, where Tyndarus resided. This is spoken in contempt.

In conflict fierce; whene'er his arms obtain'd
 Aught of advantage, Menelaus thy praise
 Extoll'd, to grieve my son in that his love
 Met with a potent rival: if success
 Favour'd the Trojans, he was nothing then.
 Thine eyes were fix'd on Fortune; this thy care,
 To follow her; to Virtue thou wou'dst pay
 No homage. Yet with ropes didst thou attempt,
 Such is thy plea, down from the walls to slide
 By stealth, as if detain'd against thy will:
 By whom wast thou surpris'd in act to fix
 The pendent rope, or point the sharpen'd sword?
 This would a woman of a gen'rous soul,
 Who sorrow'd for her husband lost, have done.
 Yet much did I admonish thee, and oft,
 "Leave, O my daughter, leave us: other wives
 "My sons shall wed: I to the Grecian ships
 "Will send thee secretly; that war no more
 "'Twixt Greece and us may rage:" to this thy heart
 Was much averse; still in thy husband's house
 Thy insolence of grandeur wou'dst thou hold,
 Imperious still from thy barbaric train
 Claim prostrate adoration: there thy pride
 Found rich supplies; from thence didst thou come forth
 Gorgeously vested, and the same bright sky
 View with thy husband, O detested wretch,
 When it became thee with thy garments rent,
 Humble, and cow'ring, and thy tresses shorn,
 To have appear'd, and for thy former faults
 To veil thy shameless pride with modesty.
 But, Menelaus, that thou may'st know what end
 My words would have, give Greece a glorious crown
 By killing her, and this thy law confirm
 To other women, "She who dares betray
 "Her husband, faithless to his bed, shall die."

CHOR. Oh, for the honour of thy ancestors,
 And of thy house, punish thy wife; from Greece
 Take this vile woman, this reproach, away;

And shew thy gen'rous spirit to thy foes.

MEN. In this thy sentiment accords with mine,
That willingly she left my house, and sought
A foreign bed ; and, to set off her plea,
Is Venus introduc'd. Go, where with stones
Thou shalt be crush'd : and in one hour repay
The Grecians for their tedious toils, by death,
That thou may'st learn ne'er to disgrace me more.

HEL. Low at thy knees a suppliant I beg thee,
To me impute not what the gods have done
Amiss : Ah, do not kill me ; pardon me.

HEC. Thy brave associates in this wasteful war,
Whom she hath slain, I beg thee for their sake,
And for my children's, do not thou betray.

MEN. Forbear, age-honour'd lady ; for of her
I have no heed. You, who attend me, hence
To the bark bear her : she shall sail for Greece.

HEC. Let her not enter the same bark with thee.

MEN. Why ? Is the freight more heavy than before ?

HEC. He is no lover, who not always loves.

MEN. That every thought of love may be discharg'd,
Thy will shall be complied with : the same bark
With me she shall not enter : not amiss
Is thy monition. When she comes to Greece,
For her vile deeds as vilely shall she die,
And teach all other women to be chaste,
No easy lesson : yet her death with fear
Shall strike their folly, be they worse than she.

HECUBA, CHORUS.

CHORUS.

STRO. 1. So, to the Grecian arms a prey,
The temple Ilium's height that crown'd,
The altar breathing odours round,
O Jove, dost thou betray ;
The flames of holy sacrifice,
The clouds of incense wreathing to the skies.
The tow'rs of Pergamus that rose

A sacred rampire 'gainst the foes,
The darksome, ivy-vested woods,
The woods that wave on Ida's brow,
Down whose steep sides the cool translucent floods
In mazy channels flow,
The height, which first the sun's bright ray
Impurples with the orient beams of day.

ANTIS. 1. Ah, banish'd is each solemn rite;
The sacred choirs with tuneful song,
Echoing thy hollow rocks among,
No more shall charm the night:
No more thy summits shall behold
The forms of gods that breathe in sculptur'd gold:
On thee the full-orb'd moon no more
Shall Phrygia's hallow'd sports restore.
O king, in yon ethereal skies
High-thron'd who hold'st thy sov'reign state,
Will in thy soul no gentle pity rise,
For Troy's unhappy fate,
Sunk to the dust her tow'rd head,
As wide the raging flames their ravage spread?

STRO. 2. Dear to my soul, my wedded lord,
Fall'n, fall'n beneath the slaught'ring sword,
Nor cleansing bath, nor decent tomb
Was thine, but in the Stygian gloom
Wanders thy melancholy ghost.
But me the bark that ploughs the main,
Wing'd with her swelling sails, shall bear
To Argos fam'd for steeds that whirl the car:
Where by the lab'ring Cyclops rise
The rampir'd walls that brave the skies.
My children, now a friendless train,
Wailing with sighs and tears their fate,
Call on their mother in the gate:
Their mother from their eyes the Grecian host
In the black vessel bear away,
And dash with oars the foaming sea;
To sacred Salamis they sweep,

Or where the Isthmus o'er the deep
 Stretches its head, and views with pride
 An ocean rolling 'gainst each side;
 Where Pelops in the rocky strait
 Fix'd in old times his royal seat.

ANTIS. 2. On the detested bark, the waves
 In the wide ocean when she braves
 May the loud thunder's deep'ning roar
 Fierce its tempestuous fury pour;
 And, kindled by Idæan Jove,
 The forked lightning's bick'ring flame,
 In haughty triumph as she rides,
 Fall on her deck, and pierce her rifted sides:
 For me from Ilium, bath'd in tears,
 From my lov'd country far she bears
 A slave to some proud Grecian dame.
 Reflecting Helen's winning grace
 The golden mirror there hath place,
 At which the virgins joy their charms t' improve.
 Ne'er may she reach the Spartan shore,
 Her household gods ne'er visit more,
 Through Pitane ne'er proudly pass,
 Nor through Minerva's gates of brass;
 For Greece, through all its wide domains,
 With shame her fatal marriage stains;
 And gives through scenes of bitterest woe
 The streams of Simois to flow.

Alas! in quick succession o'er this land
 Ills roll on ill. Behold, ye Trojan dames
 Oppress'd with woes, the dead Astyanax,
 Thrown by the ruthless Grecians from the tow'rs.

TALTHYBIUS, HECUBA, CHORUS.

TALT. One vessel, royal Hecuba, yet waits

1223. Pitane is a town on the banks of Eurotas.

1224. This temple of Minerva at Sparta is often mentioned.

To plough the deep, the treasures that remain,
Selected for Achilles' son, to bear
To Phthia's shore: the youthful chief is gone,
Inform'd of some calamities, which late
Have fall'n on Peleus, that Acastus, son
Of Pelias, hath driv'n him from his realms:
On this with quicker speed, than if the time
Allow'd delay, he sail'd, and with him bore
Andromache, who from mine eyes wrung tears
At her departure, for her country such
Her mournful sighs, and such at Hector's tomb
Her invocations: earnest her request
To thee, that her dead child, who from the tow'r
Fell and expir'd, thou in the earth wou'dst lay,
Thy Hector's son; and this brass-plated shield,
The terror of the Grecians, which his father
Before his breast once rais'd; that to the house
Of Peleus, nay to the same chamber, where
Andromache, the mother of this child,
Must mount the nuptial bed, she may not bear it,
To sorrow at its sight: but for the chest
Of cedar, for the marble tomb, in this
That thou wou'dst bury him; conjuring me
To give him to thy arms, that with what robes,
And crowns, thy present fortune yields thee means,
Thou her dead son wou'dst grace, since she is gone,
And her lord's haste allow'd her not to give
Her dear child to the tomb. When thou hast dress'd
The body with what ornaments thou may'st,
The earth will we heap on him; then we sail.
With thy best speed what is injoin'd thee do:
From one toil I have freed thee; passing o'er
Scamander's stream the body I have bath'd,
And wash'd its wounds: but now I go to sink
Deep in the earth his place of sepulture,
That with more speed, with what thou hast in charge
My toil concurring, we may sail for Greece.

HECUBA, CHORUS.

HEC. Place the orb'd shield of Hector on the ground,
A mournful sight, nor pleasing to mine eyes.
Why, O ye Grecians, who in arms excel
More than in gen'rous minds, why have you wrought,
Fearing this child, a slaughter to this hour
Unheard of? Was it lest the time might come
When he might raise fall'n Troy? There was no cause:
E'en when my Hector shone in prosp'rous arms,
And thousands with him shook the purple spear,
We perish'd: since the vanquish'd city sunk
Your prey, and in the war the Phrygian force
Was wasted, such an infant could you fear?
The fear, which reason disavows, I blame.
O thou most dear, how hapless was thy death!
Hadst thou in manhood's prime, the nuptial bed
Possess'd, and high, imperial, godlike pow'r,
Died for thy country, happy hadst thou been,
If aught of these be happy: now, my child,
These to thine eyes presented and thy thought,
Thou didst not taste, nor aught of what thy house
Contain'd enjoy. Ah me, how wretchedly
Thy father's walls, the tow'rs by Phœbus rais'd,
Have rent the crisped ringlets from thy head,
Which thy fond mother cherish'd, nor withheld
The frequent kiss! but now, the bones all crush'd,
The slaughter riots, to abstain from words
Of harsher utt'rance. Ah, these hands, whose joints
Once the dear image of thy father's bore,
Now lie with loosen'd nerves! O thou dear mouth,
Which utter'dst many a spritely pleasantry,
How art thou mangled? Where thy promise now
Which once thou mad'st me, hanging on my robes?
"O mother, didst thou say, these clust'ring locks
"Will I for thee cut off, and to thy tomb
"With my companions bear them, hailing thee
"With dear address." Such honours now to me
Thou dost not pay; but thee, unhappy child,

Dead in thy early bloom, must I inter,
Old, of my country, of my children reft.
Ah me, are all my fond embraces, all
My nursing pains to lull thy infancy
To sleep, thus lost? And on thy tomb what verse,
Thy death declaring, shall the bard inscribe?
“This child the Grecians, for they fear’d him, slew.”
A verse recording the disgrace of Greece.
But of thy father’s wealth though reft, his shield
Shall yet be thine, and on its plated brass
Thou shalt be laid in th’ earth. O thou, the fence
Of Hector’s nervous arm, thou hast, O shield,
Lost thy best guardian! Yet how sweet to trace
The mark of his strong grasp, and on the verge
Of thy high orb the sweat, which from his brows
Amidst his toils oft dropt, when to his face
Close he applied thee! For th’ unhappy dead
Bring what of ornament is left us now;
For not to splendor hath the god assign’d
Our fortunes; but of what I have to grace thee
Thou shalt receive. Of mortals him I deem
Unwise, who, thinking that his state is blest,
Joys as secure: for Fortune, like a man
Distemper’d in his senses, this way now,
Now that way leaps, inconstant in her course.
No mortal knows stability of bliss.

CHOR. See, from the spoils of Troy their ready hands
Have brought thee ornaments t’ inwrap the dead.

HEC. Thee, O my child, not victor with the bow
O’er thy compeers, nor on the spritely steed,
Customs held high by Phrygia’s manly sons,
Unwearied in the chase, thy father’s mother
Decks with these ornaments from treasures once
Thine own; but Helen, by the gods abhorr’d,
Hath rent them from thee, hath destroy’d thy life,
And all thy hapless house in ruins laid.

CHOR. O thou hast touch’d, O thou hast touch’d my heart,
Thou, who wast once my city’s mighty king!

HEC. Around thy limbs I wrap these gorgeous vests
Of Phrygian texture, which thou shou'dst have worn
To grace thy nuptials with some noble bride
Surpassing all the Asiatic dames.
And thou, with conquests glorious, mother once
Of num'rous trophies, be thou crown'd, lov'd shield
Of Hector: for, not dying, with the dead
Shalt thou be laid: with honours to be grac'd,
Thee worthier than the arms of my new lord,
The wise and base Ulysses, I esteem.

CHOR. Ah bitter lamentation! Thee, O child,
Thee shall the Earth receive: Thou, mother, raise
The cry that wails the dead.

HEC. My heart is rent.

CHOR. My heart too for thy dreadful ills is rent.

HEC. Thy wounds with hands medicinal, ah me,
Vain service! will I bind. Among the dead
All that remains shall be thy father's care.

CHOR. Strike, strike thy head; loud let thy hands resound.
Ah me!

HEC. Ye females dearest to my soul!

CHOR. Give utterance, royal lady, to thy griefs.

HEC. The gods intended nothing, but my woes,
And hate to Troy, most ruthless hate. In vain
The victims at their altars then we slew.
Yet from the heights above had not their pow'r
Encompass'd us, and low beneath the earth
Sunk us in ruin, by the Muse's voice
We had not been recorded, nor the bards
To latest ages giv'n the lofty verse.
Go, in the tomb lay the unhappy dead;
For, as becomes the shades below, with crowns
He is adorn'd: but little it imports
The dead, I think, if any shall obtain
Magnificent and costly obsequies:
Vain affectation of the living this.

CHOR. Ah the unhappy mother, in thy life
Who wove her brightest hopes! Though highly blest,

As from illustrious parents thy rich stream
Of blood deriving, dreadful was thy death.

HEC. Alas, alas! Whom see I on the heights
Of Ilium, blazing torches in their hands
Waving? Some fresh misfortune threatens Troy.

TALTHYBIUS, HECUBA, CHORUS.

TALT. Ye leaders of the bands, who have in charge
To burn the town of Priam, from my voice
Hear your instructions: idle in your hands
No longer hold the flames, but hurl them, spread
The wasting blaze; that, Ilium low in dust
O'erturn'd, we may with joy return to Greece.
And you, (for now to you my speech is turn'd,)
Ye Trojan dames, soon as the chiefs shall give
The trumpet's sounding voice, go to the ships
Of Greece, that from this country you may sail.
And thou, unhappy lady worn with age,
Follow; for from Ulysses these are come,
To whom thy fortune sends thee hence a slave.

HEC. O miserable me! This is the last,
This is the extreme bound of all my ills.
I from my conuntry go; my city sinks
In flames. But haste, my aged foot, though weak,
That I may yet salute the wretched town:
O Troy, that once 'mongst the barbaric states
Stood'st high aspiring, thy illustrious name
Soon shalt thou lose, for thee the raging flames
Consume: and from our country us they lead,
Now lead us slaves. Ye gods!—but why invoke
The gods? invok'd before they did not hear.
But bear me, let me rush into the flames:
For this would be the greatest glory to me,
With thee, my burning country now to die.

TALT. Unhappy, thou art frenetic with thine ills.
Lead her, nay force her hence: for to his hand,
Charg'd by Ulysses, I must give his prize.

HEC. Woe, woe, woe, woe, intolerable woe!

O Jove, O sov'reign lord of Phrygia's realms,
Almighty sire, seest thou our miseries,
Unworthy of the race of Dardanus?

CHOR. He sees, yet this magnificent city, now
No city, is destroy'd : Troy is no more.

HEC. O sight of horror ! Ilium blazes ; high
O'er Pergamus the fiery deluge rolls,
Rolls o'er the city, and its tow' red walls.

CHOR. The glories of my country, e'en as smoke
Which on light wings is borne aloft in air,
By war are wasted ; all her blazing domes
Are sunk beneath the flames and hostile spear.

HEC. O my dear country, fost'ring land, who gav'st
My children nurture !

CHOR. O unhappy land !

HEC. Hear, O my children, know your mother's voice !

CHOR. With mournful voice dost thou address the dead ;
And throwing on the ground thy aged limbs
Dig with thy hands the earth. Behold, I bend
My knee with thine, and grov'lling on the ground
Call our unhappy husbands laid beneath.

HEC. Ah, we are borne, are dragg'd,

CHOR. O mournful voice !

HEC. Dragg'd to the house of slavery.

CHOR. From my country.

HEC. O Priam, Priam, thou indeed art fall'n,
Thou hast no tomb, no friend ; but of my woes
Thou know'st not ; for black death hath clos'd thy eyes ;
By impious slaughter is the pious fall'n !

CHOR. Ye temples of the gods, and thou, lov'd town,
Destruction from the flames and pointed spear
Is on you ; low on earth you soon will lie,
Your glories vanish'd ; for the dust, like smoke
On light wings mounting high, will leave my house
An undistinguish'd ruin ; e'en thy name,
My country, shall be lost : in different forms
Destruction comes on all : Troy is no more.

HEC. Heard you that dreadful crash ? It was the fall

Of Pergamus: the city rocks; it rocks,
 And crush'd beneath the rolling ruin sinks.
 My limbs, my trembling limbs, hence, bear me hence.

TALT. Go to the wretched day of servile life.

Alas, unhappy city! But from hence
 Go, to the Grecian ships advance thy steps.

POSTSCRIPT.

IT would have been cruel to the reader to have interrupted him amidst the foregoing high-wrought scenes with a cold critical note; yet it is impossible to quit this Drama without taking notice of a censure passed on one of its Odes by Dr. Warton. "Aristotle," says this learned and ingenious writer, "imputes it" as a fault to *many* of the Chorusses of Euripides, that they are "foreign and adventitious to the subject, and contribute nothing" to the advancement of the main action. Whereas the Chorus ought *μέγιστον εἶναι τῷ ὅλῳ, καὶ συναγωνίζεσθαι*, *Κιφ. ιη.* be a part or "member of one whole, cooperate with it, and help to accelerate" the intended event.—This remark of Aristotle, though he does "not himself produce any examples, may be verified from the" following, *among many others.* In the Phœnicians of Euripides "they sing a long, and very beautiful, but ill-placed hymn to" Mars. I speak of that which begins so nobly, ὦ πολέμοχθος "Ἄρης. And a still more glaring instance may be brought from" the end of the third act of the Troades, in which the story of "Ganymede is introduced not very artificially. To these may be" added that exquisite Ode in praise of Apollo, descriptive of his "birth and victories, which we find in the Iphigenia in Tauris, v. "1234, &c." *Essay on the Writings and Genius of Pope*, vol. i. p. 71. How far this censure on the three Odes particularized is just, it is the translator's business, however disagreeable, to examine.

In this Drama the Chorus (l. 545. of the translation) invokes the Muse to pour a strain of woe accorded to the unhappy condition of Troy. The false joy of the last delusive day, the fraud of the Grecians, and the unexpected horrors of that fatal

night, are finely described. As the Drama proceeds, every new scene brings some additional distress to these captive dames, particularly to their honoured queen; and nothing now remained to them, save Memory and the Muse, nothing but the melancholy remembrance of the former glory, and the former and present ruin of Troy: hence (l. 853.) they address themselves in a bold apostrophe to Telamon, who had formerly distinguished himself under Hercules in overturning the towers of Ilium, though built by Apollo: thus

Twice rag'd the spear around her walls;
And twice with thund'ring sound the city falls.

“Vain then, O Dardan Boy, is thy honourable office at the feasts
“of Jupiter: the city, which gave thee birth, sinks in flames; the
“shores resound with the cries of distress; the places, once the
“scenes of thy youthful delight, are wasted; and thou, even at the
“throne of Jupiter, regardless of the fate of thy country, art
“calmly wooing the Graces to give thee new beauties. Thou too,
“Aurora, who once wast proud of an alliance with the Dardans,
“proud to bear the favoured youth to the ethereal regions, hast
“forgot thy former love, nor given protection to a city once so
“honoured by thee; from thy love we might have conceived
“great hopes: but the love of the gods yields no aid to Troy.”
In this Ode every idea arises from the subject of the Drama, and heightens the distress of the Trojan Dames, by shewing that even the former favours of the gods, the honourable office of Ganymede, rapti Ganymedis honores, and the love of Aurora for Tithonus, which had exalted the glories of Troy to the most splendid height, were of no avail to save the city from total destruction.

It should be remembered that Tragedy yet preserved much of its original sacred character; hence it is that many of the sublimest Odes in the Dramas of the three great Athenian poets are hymns to the gods, but always appropriated to the subject. Had the censured Ode in praise of Apollo been merely descriptive of his birth and victories, however exquisite it might be, it would have been impertinent enough: but his birth is only touched upon in common with that of his sister Diana, the goddess of the place; the exquisite art of which, though designedly kept down by the poet, must be evident to every reader of taste; and of his victories not one is mentioned, but that over the Python, upon which he seized the oracular shrine, which never was disgraced with false-

hood, in the possession of which he was confirmed by Jupiter: upon this, and the certainty of his answers, the whole Ode turns. Could the imagination of man have conceived any thing of greater propriety than this address, or better adapted to the circumstance in that important moment when Orestes, in obedience to the oracular command of this god, had seized the statue of Diana, and fled with his sister, as their fate depended upon the veracity of the oracle?

In the Phœnissæ the maternal affection of Jocasta and her prudent endeavours to reconcile her contending sons had proved ineffectual; she had procured an interview between the brothers, but they parted in the fiercest rage of implacable animosity, and the city was threatened with all the horrors of war. At such a time, and under such circumstances, was a song to Mars, one of the tutelary gods of Thebes, ill-placed? But, long as this hymn to Mars is said to be, it should be observed that the Strophe only is addressed to that god, remonstrating against his preference of arms, and blood, and death, to the peaceful and festive rites of Bacchus, another tutelary god of the city: the Antistrophe and Epode are fine apostrophes to other interesting subjects; and in the three divisions of this very beautiful Ode there is nothing foreign or adventitious to the subject.

It is painful to be obliged to mention so respectable a name as that of Dr. Warton but in terms of the warmest commendation; but truth and justice to Euripides have extorted these remarks on his censure, even though it comes forth under the sanction of Aristotle. But, after all, this learned and excellent writer seems to have mistaken the meaning of the great Critic, who, in his concise and dry manner, says, "that the Chorus ought to bear the office of a person of the drama, to be a part of the whole, and to sustain a share of the action, not as in Euripides, but as in Sophocles." This does not descend to particular passages, or allude to this Ode or that Ode as being foreign and adventitious to the subject; but it censures the choice of the persons of the Chorus, where such are introduced to sustain that important character, who have not sufficient connection with the subject, and are too little interested in the event, to bear an earnest and strenuous share in the action. How far the tragedies of Euripides which are lost, gave occasion to this censure of Aristotle, it is impossible for us to judge; of those that remain, the Chorus of the Trojan Dames, for one instance *among many others*, comes up to his full

idea of perfection: the fault, at which he hints, is particularly imputable to the Phœnissæ. On the Chorus of this Drama the translator, in his preface to it, has observed, that “as the persons
“of these virgins were sacred, they being devoted to the service
“of Apollo at Delphi, their apprehensions were not so strongly
“alarmed; and as they were strangers at Thebes, they could not
“be so deeply concerned as natives, whose persons, lives, and
“fortunes, with all they hold most dear, were in great and immediate danger: hence their part is less interesting, their odes are
“less pertinent and less animated, and the Drama wants much of
“that distress and terror which agitates the Theban Virgins
“through the scenes of Æschylus.” It may be urged in excuse of Euripides that he was thus precluded from the choice of the proper persons for his Chorus in this Drama; for in this part no succeeding poet could hope to exceed, or even equal, Æschylus; he was therefore obliged to change his ground; his tragedy, though wonderfully fine, is so much the worse for it: we feel the force of the general precept of Aristotle; but the attempt to point out partial faults is dangerous, and will be unsuccessful.



H E C U B A.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

HECUBA

POLYXENA

ULYSSES

TALTHYBIUS

AGAMEMNON

POLYMESTOR

FEMALE ATTENDANT

CHORUS of TROJAN DAMES.

HECUBA.

THE tender and pathetic Euripides hath again introduced the afflicted Hecuba ; and, writing from nature more than from art, again raises in us those passions which his own heart so warmly felt. We see the unhappy queen not only overwhelmed with all the distresses so exquisitely painted in the former drama, but distracted with visions portending further miseries : these soon burst upon her. The devoted Polyxena fixes our attention ; we are struck with admiration at her delicate sensibility and generous spirit ; we melt with pity at her unhappy fate ; but we are roused from this sympathetic sorrow by scenes of a different nature : the dissimulation of the barbarous Polymestor excites our abhorrence, and the revenge of Hecuba fills us with terror. Had nothing of Euripides remained to us but this Drama, we must have allowed the justness of Aristotle's remark, that he is of all poets **THE MOST TRAGIC.**

The Scene is before the Grecian tents, on the coast of the Thracian Chersonese.



HECUBA.

THE GHOST OF POLYDORUS.

THE mansions of the dead, the gates of darkness,
Where Pluto dwells from the blest gods apart,
I leave, the son of Hecuba and Priam.
When danger threaten'd that the Phrygian state
Would sink beneath the conqu'ring spear of Greece,
He, fearing for his much-lov'd Polydore,
In secret sent me from the Trojan land,
To Polymestor's court, his Thracian friend,
Bound to him by each hospitable tie ;
Who cultivates this fertile Chersonese,
And with his spear a warlike people rules.
With me he sent in secret stores of gold,
That, if the walls of Troy should fall, his sons,
Whoe'er surviv'd, might find a rich support.
I was the youngest of the sons of Priam,
And therefore sent, because my youthful arm
Could not sustain the shield, or hurl the spear.
Whilst Troy's strong bulwarks stood, and her high tow'rs
Unshaken, and whilst Hector's spear prevail'd,
The Thracian rear'd me with a father's care,
And I, like some fair plant, grew up and flourish'd.
But when Troy sunk, her Hector now no more,
And Priam's palace smok'd upon the ground,
Himself upon the hallow'd altar fall'n
Slain by Achilles' blood-polluted son,

11. In the martial times of antiquity the spear was revered as something divine, and signified the chief command in arms; it was also the insigne of the highest civil authority; in this sense Euripides in other places uses the word *δορυ*.

This hospitable friend, to seize my gold,
Kill'd me, and rudely toss'd my lifeless corse
Into the billows of the surging sea;
There yet it lies, now dash'd upon the strand,
Now whelm'd beneath the tide's returning wave,
Unwept, unburied. For my mother's sake
I wander, having left my breathless body:
Three days I hover here, for now three days
Hath the unhappy Hecuba from Troy
Continued on th' abhorred Chersonese:
Here all the Grecians hold their anchor'd ships,
And sit inactive on the Thracian shore;
For Peleus' son appearing o'er his tomb,
Achilles, hath detain'd the Argive troops,
As they directed home their sea-dipt oars;
Polyxena, my sister, he demands,
A victim dear to grace his honour'd tomb;
Nor shall he not be gratified; so high
His grateful friends revere his mighty name.
This day fate leads my sister to her death:
Two lifeless bodies shall the mother see
Of her two children, that unhappy virgin's,
And mine. The rites of sepulture t' obtain,
Before a female slave will I appear
Here on the wave-wash'd shore: for from the pow'rs,
That rule beneath, this grace have I implor'd,
To find a tomb, and by my mother's hand.
These desir'd honours shall be mine: but far
From th' aged Hecuba will I withdraw,
Who now from Agamemnon's tent advances
Affrighted at the vision which I sent.
Alas, my mother! who from royal seat
Hast seen the day of slavery: ill thou farest,
Worse for the change from well; thy former state
Sunk by some god, and counterpois'd with ruin.

HECUBA, CHORUS.

HEC. Lead me, ye Trojan dames, a little onward,

A little onward lead an aged matron,
Now your poor fellow-slave, but once your queen.
Take me, support me, lead me, bear me up,
Holding my aged hand: myself the while
Will lean upon this bending staff, and guide
The slow advances of my feeble feet.
Thou beaming light of day! Ye shades of night!
With phantoms thus, with terrors of the dark
Why am I thus distracted? And, O earth,
Thou awful mother of black-winged dreams,
Avert these visions of the night, which late
Dreams of my son kindly in Thrace preserv'd,
Dreams of Polyxena, my much-lov'd daughter
Presented to my soul! I saw, I knew,
I understood the vision, dreadful sight!
Gods of this land, preserve my son, who now,
The sole remaining pillar of my house,
Amidst the hospitable snows of Thrace
Finds a protector in his father's friend.
Yet I forebode some ill: some dismal tidings
Will jar in harsh notes on our wounded ears;
For my soul shivers with unwonted terrors.
Tell me, ye Trojan dames, where find I now
The divine spirit of my Helenus,
Where my Cassandra's, to expound my dreams?
I saw a dappled fawn torn from my bosom,
Forcibly torn by the wolf's bloody gripe,
And slaughter'd, piteous sight! Dreadful to me
This vision: dreadful that which late appear'd
O'er proud Achilles' tomb; for he demands
A victim, some unhappy Trojan dame.
But from my daughter, suppliant I entreat you,
Gods, from my daughter far avert this ill!

CHOR. With quick pace, Hecuba, to thee I fly,
Leaving the proud tents of our lords, by lot
Where I am doom'd a slave, inthrall'd beneath
The Grecian spear, and dragg'd from Ilium's walls,
Not to alleviate thy miseries,

But loaded with the weight of heavy news,
A messenger of griefs, lady, to thee.
The Greeks in council have decreed to give
Thy daughter as a victim to Achilles:
Thou know'st that he, appearing o'er his tomb
In all his golden arms, stopp'd their fleet ships,
Their sails unfurl'd and waving in the wind,
Calling aloud, "And is it thus, ye Greeks,
"You speed your course, my tomb unhonour'd left?"
The waves of much contention soon arose,
The warrior troops dividing their resolves,
The victim some to offer, some refuse.
The royal Agamemnon strove with zeal
To favour thee, and cultivate the love
Of the inspired Cassandra: but the sons
Of Theseus, the Athenian chiefs, talk'd high,
Propounding each a different argument,
In this according both, with purple blood
To grace Pelides' tomb, and not prefer
Cassandra's bed before the hero's spear.
High the debate, and doubtful the event,
Till now Ulysses, wily sophister,
Steeping his words in honey to allure
The populace, advis'd them not to slight
The noblest Greek to spare a captive's blood;
Nor let the slain, standing near Proserpine,
Complain that Greece is thankless to her heroes,
Who for their country died on Ilium's plain.
Soon, very soon Ulysses will be here
To tear the tender virgin from thy bosom,
And drag her from thy aged arms. But go,
Go to the temples, to the altars go,
Fall suppliant at Agamemnon's knees,
Invoke the gods of heav'n, the gods beneath;
Either thy pray'rs must save thee from the loss
Of this unhappy daughter, or thine eyes
Behold her fall'n a victim at the tomb,
Her virgin limbs purpled with blood, that wells

In dark streams from her golden-tressed neck.
 HEC. O miserable me ! What voice of woe,
 What plaints, what lamentations shall I utter ?
 Wretched through wretched age, and slavery
 Harsh, unsupportable ? O wretch, wretch, wretch !
 Who will protect me now ? What child, what state ?
 My husband is no more, my sons no more.
 Where shall th' unhappy find relief ? What god,
 What pitying pow'r will succour my distress ?
 Ye messengers of ill, destructive ill,
 You have undone me, ruin'd me ; no more,
 The light of life hath no more charms for me.
 Lead my unhappy steps, lead my old age
 Nearer this tent. My daughter, O thou child
 Of a most wretched mother, come, come forth ;
 It is thy mother's voice ; come forth, my child,
 That I may tell thee all this tale of woe,
 A tale no less importing than thy life.

HECUBA, POLYXENA, CHORUS.

POL. I come : but why, why calls my mother thus ?
 What new affliction hast thou now to tell,
 That thus thou draw'st me trembling from the tent,
 Like a poor bird affrighted from its nest ?
 HEC. Alas, my child !
 POL. Why those ill-boding words,
 Ominous to me ?
 HEC. Thy life, alas, thy life—
 POL. Speak to me, tell me, hide it not from me.
 I fear, I fear : why heaves that deep-drawn sigh ?
 HEC. My child, thou child of an unhappy mother !
 POL. Tell me thy grief.
 HEC. Pelides' ruthless son,
 With the united suffrage of all Greece,
 Urges to slay thee at his father's tomb.
 POL. These are indeed unmeasurable ills.
 But tell me, tell me all.
 HEC. I do, my child,

A tale that chokes my voice, the votes of Greece
Touching thy life.

POL.

Unhappy mother, sunk
Beneath affliction, and the miseries
Of painful life, destin'd to suffer wrongs
Abhorr'd unutterable ! Now no more
Shall thy sad daughter tend thy wretched age,
Wretched herself in joint captivity.
For thou shalt see me torn from thy fond arms,
And like a mountain heifer sacrific'd
To the infernal pow'rs, untimely sent
To the dark regions of eternal night ;
'There 'mongst the dead unhappy shall I lie.
But, my afflicted mother, 'tis for thee
I pour these complaints, and for thy childless age.
My life, my wrongs, my ignominious fate
I mourn not ; death to me is happiness,
And triumph o'er the tyranny of fortune.

CHOR.

But see, with hasty step Ulysses comes,
Bringing, be sure, some message of fresh ill.

ULYSSES, HECUBA, POLYXENA, CHORUS.

ULYS.

Lady, the purpose of the host, I ween,
Is not to thee unknown ; yet I must speak it.
Polyxena, thy daughter, on the tomb
High to Achilles rais'd, a victim Greece
Decrees : to lead the virgin is my charge.
The hero's son, presiding o'er the rites,
Waits to receive her. How wilt thou resolve ?
Advise thee : be not dragg'd away by force,
Nor tempt the rude touch of a stronger hand :
Weigh well the pow'r, the presence of thy ills.
To bear afflictions as we ought is wise.

HEC.

It comes, alas ! the dreadful trial comes,
Of lamentation full, nor void of tears.
And yet I am not dead : would I were dead !
Jove hath not yet destroy'd me ; yet I live
To bear affliction on affliction, each,

O miserable, greater than the former.
But may slaves be permitted of the free
To ask—I mean no rudeness, no reproach—
But may we ask? And wilt thou answer us?

ULYS. You may; ask freely: I allow the time.

HEC. Dost thou remember when thou camest to Troy
A spy, disfigur'd in vile weeds, thine eyes
Rain'd drops of death, that trickled down thy beard?

ULYS. Th' impression was too strong to be eras'd.

HEC. But Helen knew thee, and told me alone.

ULYS. The mighty danger I remember well.

HEC. Then lowly lay'st thou grovelling at my knees.

ULYS. So that my cold hand died within thy robe.

HEC. I sav'd thee then, and sent thee from the town.

ULYS. Hence I behold the light of this fair sun.

HEC. What didst thou say, when thou wast then my slave?

ULYS. Pleading for life I could find many words.

HEC. Thus thine own counsels prove thee base: thy life

I sav'd; thy words confess it: thou returnest

To us no good, but always extreme ill.

A thankless tribe you are, who file your tongues

To popular grace: would I had never known you!

Of injuries to friends you reckon not, if

Your fine speech wins the favour of the people.

But why these artful trains t' allure their voice

Thus to decree the murder of my child?

What dire necessity compels you thus

An human victim at the tomb to slay!

Or doth Achilles, with just rage inflamed

'Gainst those that wrought his death, intend her death?

She never did him wrong: let him demand

Your Helen as a victim to his tomb;

She wrought his death by drawing him to Troy.

If some illustrious captive, some choice beauty

Must be devoted, beauty is not ours:

Th' accomplish'd Helen boasts superior charms,

Not less injurious found than we have been.

These things I urge in equitable plea.

But at my suit what grace thou shou'dst requite,
 Hear: thou hast touch'd my hand, thou hast fall'n down,
 Thou own'st it too, a suppliant at my knees:
 And now thy hand I touch, thy knees I grasp;
 Requite that grace I beg thee, I conjure thee,
 Tear not my daughter from me, slay her not;
 We have already had enough of death.
 In her delighted I forget my griefs;
 The sole remaining comfort of my age,
 My kingdom she, my nurse, my staff, my guide.
 Ill it becomes the great to shew their greatness
 In unbecoming insolent commands:
 Nor should the prosperous too proudly deem
 Their high state stedfast, and exempt from change:
 I once was so, but now am so no more;
 One day tore from me all my happiness.
 But reverence thy suppliant, pity me,
 Go to the troops, address them, let them know
 How infamous it is to murder women,
 Dragg'd from the altars, whom before they spared.
 Teach them to pity us. The laws of blood
 Are equal to us slaves, and you our lords.
 Speak thou but ill, thy dignity shall move them:
 'Tis not the counsel, but the speaker's worth,
 That gives persuasion to his eloquence.

CHOR. The sternest and the most unfeeling nature,
 Hearing thy lamentable complaints, must melt,
 And drop the sweet dew of impassion'd pity.

ULYS. Hecuba, be advis'd: let not thy rage
 Deem him thine enemy, who reasons well.
 To thee I owe my safety; in return
 Thy person I am ready to protect.
 But what I counsell'd 'midst th' assembled chiefs
 My tongue retracts not: to the noblest Greek,
 Who since the fall of Troy demands a victim,
 To give the victim he demands, thy daughter.
 That state must fall, and many states have fall'n,
 Where the brave soul, that harbours virtuous thought,

Neglected like the vilest coward lies.
 Achilles, lady, by transcendent worth
 Merits our honours, the illustrious chief,
 Who shed for Greece his dear blood in the dust.
 Shame were it then to use the hero's might
 Whilst life inform'd him, and to slight him dead.
 Go to: should Greece again unite her pow'rs,
 Should other wars call her brave sons to arms,
 Would they then fight, or choose ignoble ease,
 If he, that falls in war, unhonour'd lies?
 For me whilst life remains, let me receive
 Some slight reward, the slight reward contents:
 But when I die, build me the lofty tomb,
 For great intent and honourable deed
 A monument to late posterity.
 Thou wailest thy afflictions: but reflect,
 We have our aged matrons, hoary sires,
 And tender brides widow'd of noble husbands,
 Whose bones lie mouldering in the dust of Troy,
 That feel afflictions piercing as thy own:
 Then bear them. If in reverencing the dead
 We judge amiss, our folly on our heads.
 Barbarians you nor reverence your friends,
 Nor to the brave, that honourably died,
 Pay honours due. Hence conquest waits on Greece,
 And your ill counsels yield you like reward.

CHOR. Ah me, how wretched is the state of slaves,
 Compell'd by force to bear indignities !

HEC. In vain, my child, for thy dear life I plead;
 My words are lost, and vanish in the air.
 Thou may'st have more persuasion than thy mother;
 Like the sweet nightingale, whose plaintive notes
 Charm the dull ear of night, plead for thy life;
 In all the eloquence of grief fall down,
 Embrace his knees: nor want'st thou argument,
 He too hath children; move his pity to thee.

POL. I see, Ulysses, that thou hid'st thy hand
 Beneath thy robe, and turn'st thy face away,

Inexorably bent on stern repulse.
My pray'rs, be confident, shall not assail thee.
I follow thee: Necessity requires it,
And death's my warm wish now: should I refuse,
The too fond love of life would mark me base.
Why should I wish to live? My morn of life
Rose royally, a mighty monarch's daughter,
Nurs'd in the lap of honourable Hope,
A bride for kings, who with no common ardour
Transported sought to lead me to their thrones.
With lowly reverence the Trojan dames
Beheld me, as the virgin train among
I mov'd superior like a goddess, save
Of mortal mould. But I am now a slave:
That word, new to my ears, makes death my wish.
Perchance some savage lord, whose gold might buy
This wretched sister of th' illustrious Hector,
Might wear me down in household drudgery,
Compell'd or at the mill, or in the loom,
To toil away the miserable day;
Then bid some paltry slave pollute my bed,
To which contending monarchs late aspir'd.
It shall not be: free leave I heav'n's sweet light,
And free present me to the shades below.
Lead then, Ulysses, lead me to my death;
For now no ray of hope, no beam of thought
Gives confidence of brighter days to come.
And thou, afflicted parent, speak not, act not,
T' oppose my firm resolve; but strengthen me
To die, rather than bear dishonest wrong.
When ills unwonted seize the fortunate,
He bears them, but their hard yoke galls his neck;
Happier in death: for life, its honours lost,
Becomes a burden most intolerable.

CHOR. Strong is the mark, illustrious the high impress
Of noble birth, from great to greater still
Advancing, when the dignity of virtue
Reflects fresh lustre on nobility.

HEC. Honour is in thy words, but 'midst that honour,
 My child, dwells grief.—If you must gratify
 The son of Peleus, from yourselves t' avert
 What might cause blame, slay not, ah! slay not her;
 Lead me, Ulysses, to Achilles' tomb,
 Strike, spare not; I brought Paris forth, whose hand
 Wing'd the barb'd shaft which pierc'd this son of Thetis.

ULYS. Not thee, the hero's shade demands not thee,
 But her must Greece present the destin'd victim.

HEC. Yet slay me with my child, and pour my blood
 With hers, a double offering to the Earth,
 And him, the mighty dead, who calls for blood.

ULYS. The virgin's death sufficeth: to enough
 We add not more. Would heav'n hers might be spared!

HEC. It is of strong necessity that I
 Die with my child.

ULYS. What strong necessity?
 I know no mighty lord's commanding pow'r.

HEC. I'll clasp her, as the ivy clasps the oak.

ULYS. Not so, if temperate prudence might advise.

HEC. Never, O never will I quit my child.

ULYS. Nor I, without the virgin, leave this place.

POL. Mother, forbear: and thou, Laertes' son,
 Be gentler to a parent rack'd with grief.
 O thou unhappy, strive not with the strong.
 Wou'dst thou fall prostrate, harrow up the ground,
 And rend thy aged limbs, unseemly dragg'd
 By the rude violence of younger hands?
 Ah, draw not on thee such indignities!
 But, my lov'd mother, give me thy dear hand,
 And to join cheek to cheek; for now no more,
 No more shall I behold the sun's bright beams,
 His orb no more: receive my last address:
 To the dark mansions of the dead I go.

HEC. And I in heav'n's fair light shall be a slave.

POL. Nor bridal bow'r, nor nuptial torch awaits me.

HEC. Mournful thy state, but miserable mine.

POL. There far from thee in darkness shall I lie.

HEC. What shall I do, alas ! where end my life ?

POL. Born of free parents I shall die a slave.

HEC. And I of fifty children am bereav'd.

POL. To Hector what, and to thy aged husband
What message shall I bear ?

HEC. That I'm most wretched.

POL. Alas, thou tenderest, kindest, best-lov'd parent !

HEC. Alas, my child's untimely cruel fate !

POL. Mother, farewell : farewell Cassandra too !

HEC. Fare others well ; nothing is well to me.

POL. Farewell, my Polydore in warlike Thrace !

HEC. If yet he lives : I doubt ; so wretched all.

POL. He lives, and lives to close thy dying eyes.

HEC. I die before my death beneath my ills.

POL. Lead me, Ulysses ; but first veil my head.

My heart melts in me at my mother's griefs,

And, e'er I die, my wailings melt her heart.

O light ! for yet I may express thy name,

Our commerce is no more, save the short space

The sword waits for me at Achilles' tomb.

HECUBA, CHORUS.

HEC. Ah me ! I faint : my limbs no more support me.

My daughter, do but touch me ; stretch thy hand,

Give it me : do not leave me childless thus.

Lost, irrecoverably lost, undone !——

Would I might see the Spartan Helen thus ;

For her bright eyes brought all these ills on Troy.

CHORUS.

STRO. 1. Tell me ye gales, ye rising gales,

That lightly sweep along the azure plain,

Whose soft breath fill the swelling sails,

And waft the vessel dancing o'er the main,

Whither, ah ! whither will ye bear

This sick'ning daughter of despair ?

What proud lord's rigour shall the slave deplore

On Doric or on Phthian shore ;

Where the rich father of translucent floods,
 Apidanus, pours his headlong waves,
 Through sunny plains, through darksome woods,
 And with his copious stream the fertile valleys laves?

ANTIS. 1. Or shall the wave-impelling oar
 Bear to the hallow'd isle my frenetic woes,
 Beneath whose base the billows roar,
 And my hard house of bondage round inclose?
 Where the new palm, the laurel where
 Shot their first branches to the air,
 Spread their green honours o'er Latona's head,
 And interwove their sacred shade.
 There, 'midst the Delian nymphs awake the lyre,
 To Dian sound the solemn strain,
 Her tresses bound in golden wire,
 Queen of the silver bow, and goddess of the plain.

STRO. 2. Or where th' Athenian tow'rs arise
 Shall these hands weave the woof, whose radiant glow
 Rivals the flow'r-impurpled dies
 That on the bosom of the young spring blow:
 And on the gorgeous pall present
 Some high and solemn argument;
 Yoke the proud coursers to Minerva's car,
 And whirl her through the walks of war:
 Or 'gainst the Titans arm'd let thund'ring Jove,
 In all heav'n's awful majesty,
 Hurl hideous ruin from above,
 Roll his tempestuous flames, and vindicate his sky?

ANTIS. 2. Alas my children, battle-slain!
 Alas my parents! Let me drop the tear,
 And raise the mournful, plaintive strain,
 Your loss lamenting and misfortune drear.
 Thee chief, imperial Troy, thy state
 I mourn deserted, desolate;
 Thy walls, thy bulwarks smoking on the ground,
 The sword of Greece triumphant round,
 I, far from Asia, o'er the wide sea born,
 In some strange land am call'd a slave,

Outcast to insolence and scorn,
And for my nuptial bed find a detested grave.

TALTHYBIUS, HECUBA, CHORUS.

TALT. Tell me, ye Trojan dames, where shall I find
Th' afflicted matron, late the queen of Troy?

CHOR. Near thee, Talthybius, on the ground she lies,
In her robes muffled.

TALT. O supreme of heav'n,
What shall we say? That thy firm providence
Regards mankind? or vain the thoughts, which deem
That the just gods are rulers in the sky,
Since tyrant Fortune lords it o'er the world?
Was not she queen of Phrygia rich in gold?
Was not she wife of Priam blest with pow'r?
But now her vanquish'd empire is no more;
Herself a slave, old, childless, on the ground
She lies, and soils her hoar head in the dust.
Alas the change! I too am old; be death
My portion, e'er I sink to that low fortune.—
Rise thou afflicted, stand on thy feet, hold up
Thy reverend head.

HEC. Disturb me not: who art thou,
That wilt not let my sorrows lie on th' earth?
Why dost thou raise me, whosoe'er thou art?

TALT. I am Talthybius, herald of the Greeks,
By Agamemnon, lady, sent for thee.

HEC. O welcome, welcome: have the Greeks decreed
To slay me also at the tomb? These tidings
Are full of joy: haste, quick, lead me, old man.

TALT. That thy dead daughter, lady, in the earth
Thou may'st entomb, attending thee I come,
Sent by the sons of Atreus, and the host.

HEC. Alas, what wilt thou say? Com'st thou not then
Charg'd with my death, but with this bitter message?
Torn from thy mother, art thou dead, my child?
Am I bereav'd of thee? Ah wretched me!
But were ye gentle in your butchery?

Or did stern rigour steel your hostile hearts?
Tell me, old man; no pleasing tale at best.

TALT. Twice, lady, shall I wipe the tearful eye
In pity of thy daughter; when she died,
The warm drop fell; now shall it fall again,
As I relate each mournful circumstance.
Th' assembled host of Greece before the tomb
Stood in full ranks at this sad sacrifice;
Achilles' son, holding the virgin's hand,
On the mound's extreme summit; near him I;
An honourable train of chosen youths,
In readiness her strugglings to restrain,
Follow'd: the golden goblet crown'd with wine
The hero's son then took, and with his hand
Pour'd the libation to his father's shade.
At his high bidding I aloud proclaim'd
Silence through all the host; and all were silent.
Then he, "O son of Peleus, O my father,
"Accept my offerings, which evoke, which sooth
"The dead: O come, drink the pure purple stream
"Which from this virgin we present to thee.
"Loose all our cables, wing our flying sails,
"Propitious give us to return from Troy,
"And safe revisit our paternal Greece."
He spoke, and with him all the people pray'd.
Then taking by the hilt his golden sword
He drew it from the scabbard: at his nod
The noble youths advanc'd to hold the virgin;
Which she perceiving, with these words address'd them,
"Ye Greeks, beneath whose arms my country fell,
"Willing I die; let no hand touch me; boldly
"To the uplifted sword I hold my neck:
"You give me to the gods: then give me free;
"Free let me die; nor let a royal maid
"Blush 'mongst the dead to hear the name of slave."
Loud was th' applause: the royal Agamemnon
Commands that none should touch her: at the voice
Of their great chief th' obedient youths retire.

Soon as she heard th' imperial word, she took
 Her robe, and from her shoulder rent it down,
 And bared her bosom, bared her polish'd breast,
 Beauteous beyond the sculptor's nicest art.
 Then bending to the earth her knee she spoke
 Words the most mournful sure that ear e'er heard,
 " If 'tis thy will, young man, to strike this bosom,
 " Strike: or my throat dost thou require? behold
 " Stretch'd to thy sword my throat." A while he paus'd,
 In pity of the virgin, then reluctant
 Deep in her bosom plung'd the fatal steel;
 Her life-blood gush'd in streams: yet e'en in death
 Studious of modesty compos'd she fell,
 And cover'd with her robe her decent limbs.
 Soon as the vital spirit through the wound
 Expir'd, in various toils the Greeks engag'd;
 Some on the breathless body scatter'd boughs;
 Some, bringing unctuous pines, the solemn pyre
 Funereal rais'd: was one remiss, the active
 Rebuk'd him thus, Dost thou stand idle here,
 Thou drone? hast thou no robe, no ornament,
 Nothing to grace this high heroic spirit,
 This glorious excellence? Thus they their zeal
 With generous ardour to the dead express'd.
 But thee, blest parent of the noblest offspring,
 Happiest of women, now I see most wretched.

CHOR. Such ruin o'er my country, and the house
 Of Priam swells: so will the rig'rous gods.

HEC. O my poor child! Which first shall I bewail
 'Midst this immensity of ills? If one
 Engage my thoughts, another rushes on
 Bringing distraction: sorrow throngs on sorrow,
 And misery to misery succeeds.

553. This was in imitation of the honours paid by the spectators to the conquerors in the Olympic and Pythian Games. So Pindar,

πολλά μιν κείνοι δίκον
 φύλλ' ἑπὶ καὶ στεφανούς.

But now the mem'ry of thy cruel fate
From my sad heart shall never be eras'd.
Yet this alleviates, Nobly didst thou die.
If favour'd by the heav'ns th' unfertile soil
Teems with the golden grain; and if the fertile,
Robb'd of due culture, brings forth nought but weeds,
We wonder not: with man it is not so;
The bad can never be but bad, the good
But good; uninjur'd by calamity
His nature braves the storm, and is good always.
But whence this difference? from the parents is it,
Or from instruction? In the school of honour
Is virtue learnt; and he, that's nurtur'd there,
Knows by the law of honour what is base.
But all in vain I bolt my sentences.
Go thou, require the Grecians not to touch
My daughter; no; but keep the rabble from her:
In a large army some are riotous,
Like wildfire runs the sailor's insolence,
And not to be flagitious is a crime.
And thou, my old attendant, take thy urn,
Dip in the sea, and bring the briny wave,
That with the last ablutions I may bathe her,
Not for the bridal bed, but for the tomb.
But I will grace her obsequies with all
The honours she deserves: ah, whence? I have not
Wherewith to grace them: as I may then: what,
What shall I do? From the poor captive dames,
That sit around me in yon lordly tents
I will collect what little ornaments
Each from her former house hath snatch'd by stealth,
And kept by these new masters unobserv'd.
Ye faded splendors of my house! O house
Once fortunate! O Priam, on whose state
Magnific wealth attended, in thy children
Supremely blest, I too was blest in them,
How are we fall'n, from all our greatness fall'n,

All our proud glories ! Yet in these we boast,
 Our gorgeous palaces, and titled honours.
 All these are nothing but high-sounding words,
 And polish'd perturbation. Happiest he
 Whose humble state misfortune never knew.

CHORUS.

STRO.

Dreadful Discord first arose,
 Leading dangers, leading woes,
 Destruction join'd the train,
 When in Ida's forests hoar
 Paris hew'd the vent'rous oar,
 And dash'd it in the main :

In gallant trim the vessel cuts its way,
 And wafts the wanton boy to Helen's arms ;
 In his wide course yon radiant orb of day
 Ne'er with his golden beams illumin'd brighter charms.

ANTIS.

Toil on toil, an hideous band.
 Ruthless Ruin's iron hand,
 Vindictive close us round.

Simois, o'er thy verdant meads
 Desolation frowning treads,

And blasts the goodly ground ;
 E'er since the Phrygian shepherd, blind to fate,
 'Midst the contending beauties of the skies
 Adjudg'd the palm, inexorable hate,
 And war, and death, and havoc round us rise.

EPOD.

Nor on Simois' banks alone
 Sighs the sad and plaintive moan, -

Or Ilion's wasted plain :

Nigh Eurotas' silver tide

Many a tear the Spartan bride

Pours for her lover slain ;

There for her children lost in wild despair
 The frenetic mother bids her sorrows flow ;
 Rends from her rev'rend head her hoary hair,
 And tears her bleeding cheeks in agonies of woe.

FEMALE ATTENDANT, CHORUS, HECUBA.

ATT. Daughters of Troy, say where is Hecuba,
 Who in the dreadful combat of affliction
 Unmatch'd surpasses all of human race:
 That crown nor man nor woman bears from her.

CHOR. What new misfortune jars upon thy tongue,
 That thy discordant clamours never sleep?

ATT. To Hecuba I bring this grief: in ills
 The voice of woe is harsh, untunable.

CHOR. See, opportunely from yon tents she comes.

ATT. O my unhappy mistress, more unhappy
 Than words can utter; Ruin comes on thee
 Quenching the light of life; a queen no more,
 A wife no more, a mother now no more!

HEC. There needs not thy rude voice to tell us this.
 But what? bringest thou here the lifeless corse
 Of my Polyxena, whose funeral rites
 Greece with united zeal prepares to grace?

ATT. Ah, she knows nothing; but lamenting still
 Polyxena, suspects not this new loss.

HEC. O my unhappy fate! Dost thou then bring
 The heav'n-inspir'd Cassandra's sacred head?

ATT. Thou speakest of the living: but the dead
 Demands the sigh: behold the corse uncover'd,
 A sight to raise astonishment and horror.

HEC. Ah me! it is my son, my Polydore,
 And dead, whom safe beneath the Thracian's roof
 I fondly deem'd: now I am lost indeed,
 In total ruin sunk. My son! My son!
 O woe, woe, woe! Affliction's cruel pow'r
 Teaches my voice the frenetic notes of madness.

ATT. Knowest thou aught then touching thy son's death?

HEC. Strange, inconceivable to thought, I see
 Horrors on horrors, woes on woes arise.
 Never henceforth, ah, never shall I know
 A day without a tear, without a groan.

CHOR. Dreadful, oh dreadful are the ills we suffer.

HEC. Alas my son, son of a wretched mother,

What hard mishap hath robb'd thee of thy life?
 What fate, what hand accurs'd hath wrought thy death?

ATT. I know not; on the wave-wash'd strand I found him.

HEC. Cast up, or fall'n beneath the bloody spear?

ATT. Cast on the smooth sand by the surging wave.

HEC. Ah me! now know I what my dream forebodes:
 The black-wing'd phantom pass'd me not; the vision
 Shew'd to my sleeping fancy's frightened eye
 My son no longer in the light of life.

CHOR. These visions, teach they who hath slain thy son?

HEC. He, our false friend, who spurs the Thracian steed,
 To whom his father for protection sent him.

CHOR. Ah me! what, slew him to possess his gold?

HEC. Unutterable deeds, abominable,
 Astonishing, unholy, horrible!
 Where are the laws of hospitality?
 Tyrant accurs'd, how hast thou gored his body,
 Gash'd with the cruel sword his youthful limbs,
 And steel'd thy heart against the sense of pity?

CHOR. Never on mortal head did angry heav'n
 Pour such a storm of miseries, as on thine.
 But Agamemnon I behold, our lord,
 Advance this way: let us be silent, friends.

AGAMEMNON, HECUBA, CHORUS.

AGAM. Why, Hecuba, dost thou delay to come,
 And place thy daughter in the tomb? For since
 Talthybius told us not to touch the virgin,
 The sons of Greece forbear, and touch her not.
 I marvel at thy stay, and come to seek thee.
 Well is each mournful honour there prepar'd,
 If in such mournful honours aught be well.—
 But, ha! what lifeless corse before the tents
 Behold I here? Some Trojan: for the robes,
 That clothe the limbs, inform me 'tis no Grecian.

HEC. Unhappy son! But, naming thee unhappy, [*apart.*
 I name myself. Alas, what shall I do?
 Shall I fall down at Agamemnon's knees,

Or bear in silence my calamities?

AGAM. Why thus lamenting dost thou turn from me?

What hath been done? tell me: what body this?

HEC. But should he treat me as a slave, a foe, [apart.
And spurn me, I should add to my afflictions.

AGAM. Not mine the spirit of prophecy, untaught
To trace the silent workings of thy mind.

HEC. Rather misdeem I not his thoughts unfriendly, [apart.
Who harbours not to me unfriendly thought?

AGAM. Hast thou a wish I should not know these things?
Be satisfied; I have no wish to know them.

HEC. Without him I can not revenge my children:
Why then deliberate? I must be bold,
Whether success attends me, or repulse.—

O royal Agamemnon, at thy knees
Suppliant I fall, and grasp thy conqu'ring hand.

AGAM. What thy request? If freedom to thine age,
That grace without reluctance may be granted.

HEC. Not freedom, but revenge: revenge on baseness:
Grant me revenge, and let me die a slave.

AGAM. In what high charge wou'dst thou engage my aid?

HEC. In nothing that thy thoughts suggest, O king.
Seest thou this corse, o'er which I drop the tear?

AGAM. I see it; nor from thence thy purport learn.

HEC. He was my son.

AGAM. Thy son, unhappy lady!

HEC. But not of those who died when Ilium fell.

AGAM. Hadst thou another, lady, those beside?

HEC. I had, but what avail'd it? him thou seest.

AGAM. Where, when the city fell, chanc'd he to be?

HEC. His father's tender fears sent him from Troy.

AGAM. Whither, he only of thy sons remov'd?

HEC. To this land, where his breathless corse was found.

AGAM. Sent to the king, to Polymestor sent?

HEC. And sent with treasures of destructive gold.

AGAM. By whom then dead, or by what cruel fate?

HEC. By whom but this inhospitable Thracian?

AGAM. Inhuman, all on fire to seize the gold!

HEC. E'en so, soon as he knew our ruin'd state.

AGAM. Where didst thou find the body, or who brought it?

HEC. She found him lying on the sea-beat shore.

AGAM. By search discover'd, or by accident?

HEC. Charg'd with the laver for Polyxena.

AGAM. By his protector murder'd and cast out?

HEC. Thus gash'd, and thrown to float upon the wave.

AGAM. Unhappy thou, unbounded are thy woes!

HEC. All woes are mine: Affliction hath no more.

AGAM. Alas, was ever woman born so wretched!

HEC. Never indeed, not Misery herself.

But for what cause thus at thy knees I fall,

Now hear: if justly I endure these ills,

And such thy thought, patient I will endure them;

If not, avenge me of this impious man,

Who, of the gods above or gods beneath

Reckless, hath done a most unholy deed,

Oft at my hospitable board receiv'd,

And number'd 'mongst the foremost of my friends:

Thus grac'd, with fell intent he slew my son;

Nor, when the deed was done, deign'd to entomb

The dead, but flung him welt'ring on the wave.

But we are slaves, but we perchance are weak;

Yet the blest gods are strong, the law is strong

Which rules e'en them; for by the law we judge

That there are gods, and form our lives, the bounds

Of justice and injustice mark'd distinct:

This law looks up to thee: if disregarded,

If he escapes its vengeance, whose bold hand

Inhospitably stabs his guest, or dares

Pollute the sacred ordinance of heav'n,

There is no justice in th' affairs of men.

Deem these deeds base then, reverence my woes,

Have pity on me, as a picture view

The living portrait of my miseries.

E'erwhile I was a queen, but now thy slave;

E'erwhile blest in my children, childless now

In my old age, abandon'd, outcast, wretched.

Ah, whither dost thou turn thy backward step?
Suing shall I reap nothing but repulse?
Why should poor mortals with incessant care
Each unavailing science strive t' attain,
And slight, as nothing worth, divine Persuasion,
Whose pow'rful charms command the hearts of men,
And bend them unreluctant to her will?
Who then may henceforth hope his state may flourish?
Of all my sons (and who could boast such sons?)
Not one is left; myself in bonds, and led
To base and ignominious servitude,
The smoke of Troy yet mounting to the skies.
In vain perchance the argument of love
Is urg'd; yet I will urge it: by thy side
My daughter, the divine Cassandra, lies:
For all thy nights of love, thy fond embraces,
Tell me, hath she no interest in thy heart,
No recompense; and I, through her, no grace?
From the sweet shades of night friendly to love,
And from love's joys, much grace is wont to spring.
Now hear me, king: Seest thou this breathless body?
A favour there is by affinity
A favour to thy love.—Yet one thing more:
Of that by some nice art, or by some god,
My arms, my hands, my hair, my feet had voice,
That each part vocal with united pray'rs
Might supplicate, implore, importune thee!
Imperial lord, illustrious light of Greece,
Let me prevail: give me thine hand; avenge me,
A wretch indeed, an outcast; yet avenge me!
The cause of justice is the good man's care,
And always to requite the villain's deeds.

CHOR. How wonderful th' events of human life,
Its laws determin'd by necessity,
Changing the sternest foe to a kind friend,
And the kind friend to a malignant foe!

AGAM. Thee, Hecuba, thy son, and thy misfortunes

I pity, nor reject thy suppliant hand;
And in the cause of justice and the gods
Wish to avenge thee on this impious Thracian;
Could I appear studious of good to thee,
Without surmise that for Cassandra's sake
I let my vengeance loose, and crush the tyrant.
Hence anxious fears rush thronging on my mind:
This man the army deems a friend, the dead
A foe: though dear to thee, yet this fond love
Is private, to the troops no common care.
Consider then; thou hast my will, my wish
To favour thee, to yield thee ready aid;
But slow, should Greece with taunting voice revile me.

HEC. Vain is the boast of liberty in man:
A slave to fortune, or a slave to wealth,
Or by the people, or the laws restrain'd,
He dares not act the dictates of his will.
But since too much thy fears incline to heed
The multitude, I free thee from that fear.
If with revenge this murderer I pursue,
Not thy concurrence, but consent I ask.
When the barbarian feels, what he shall feel,
My vengeance, should the Greeks tumultuous rise
In aid, restrain them, nor appear to act
As fav'ring me: what else th' affair requires,
Be confident, I well shall execute.

AGAM. But how? what wilt thou do? infirm with age
Grasp in thy hand the sword, and stab the tyrant?
Or work thy will with poisons? with what aid,
What hand? Or whence wilt thou procure thee friends?

HEC. Within these tents are many Trojan dames.

AGAM. The Captives, say'st thou, prizes of the Greeks?

HEC. With these will I revenge this bloody deed.

AGAM. How shall weak women over men prevail?

HEC. Numbers are strong; add stratagem, resistless.

AGAM. Yet like I not this female fellowship.

HEC. Were not Ægyptus' sons by women slain,

The Men of Lemnos all extirpated?
 But leave me to conduct this enterprise:
 Only permit this female slave to pass
 Safe through the army.—Go thou to the Thracian,
 Tell him that Hecuba, once queen of Troy,
 On matters that no less of good to him
 Import than me, would see him and his sons;
 It is of moment they should hear my words.—
 Awhile, O king, the mournful rites forbear
 For my Polyxena, my late slain daughter;
 That on one pile the brother and the sister,
 To me a double grief, may blaze together,
 And mix their ashes in one common grave.

AGAM. Then be it so: for could the army sail,
 My pow'r could not indulge thy fond request:
 But since the god breathes not the fav'ring gales,
 We must perforce await a prosp'rous voyage.
 Success attend thee: for the general good
 Of individuals and of states requires
 That vengeance overtake th' unrighteous deed,
 And virtue triumph in her just reward.

HECUBA, CHORUS.

CHORUS.

STRO. 1. No more, imperial Troy, no more
 Shall fame exalt thy matchless pow'r,
 And hail thy rampir'd height.
 From Greece the frowning tempest came,
 And, arm'd with war's destructive flame,
 Roll'd its tremendous might.
 Thy regal head with turrets crown'd,
 Reft of its honours, on the ground
 Lies low; and smoke and gore distain
 The blasted glories of thy golden reign.

ANTIS. 1. It was the still, the midnight hour,

864. For the story of the Lesbian dames, see the *Choephore* of Æschylus, p. 354. and the translator's note.

Embalm'd with sweet sleep's lenient pow'r,
 When Ruin urg'd its way :
 From jocund song and mirthful feast,
 On my chaste bed retir'd to rest
 My lord, my husband lay ;
 Secure of war high hung his spear,
 Nor did his thoughts suggest a fear
 That the proud foe, fierce to destroy,
 Insulting trod the streets of vanquish'd Troy.

STRO. 2. Before the mirror's golden round
 Curious my braided hair I bound,
 Adjusted for the night ;
 And now disrob'd, for rest prepar'd :
 Sudden tumultuous cries are heard,
 And shrieks of wild affright :
 Grecians to Grecians shouting call,
 " Now let the haughty city fall ;
 " In dust her tow'rs, her rampires lay,
 " And bear triumphant her rich spoils away."

ANTIS. 2. In one slight robe my nuptial bed,
 Loose as a Spartan maid, I fled,
 And sought Diana's shrine.
 Diana's shrine I sought in vain :
 'Twas mine to see my husband slain,
 To mourn in chains was mine.
 From my war-wasted country torn,
 And o'er the swelling billows borne,
 To Troy I cast a distant look,
 And vital warmth my fainting limbs forsook.

EPOD. In all the anguish of despair
 I pour my curses on the fatal fair :
 Bright sister of the twin-born stars of Jove,
 Curs'd be thy charms ; curs'd be thy love,
 Shepherd of Ida ; your unhallow'd flame,
 That not from Hymen, but the Furies came,
 And raging with resistless sway
 Spread desolation o'er the land.
 May Ruin's ruthless hand

Vindictive seize thee on the way;
 May the storm burst, the wild waves round thee roar,
 And never may'st thou see thy country more.

POLYMESTOR, HECUBA, CHORUS.

POL. The memory of my friend, the royal Priam,
 The sight of thee, much-honour'd Hecuba,
 Fills my sad eyes with tears, deploring thee,
 Thy ruin'd city, and thy late slain daughter.
 How mutable our state! nor greatness stands,
 Nor glory in its splendid height secure.
 These are your works, ye gods! these changes fraught
 With horrible confusion, mingled thus
 That we through ignorance might worship you.
 But plaints avail not, nor have pow'r to heal
 Th' immedicable wounds of past misfortunes.
 Let me obtain forgiveness that thus late
 I visit thee: occasions drew me far,
 E'er thy arrival, to the inland parts
 Of Thrace; return'd, I slack'd not to salute thee,
 And on my way met this thy messenger;
 Why sent, from thy own mouth I wish to learn.

HEC. Confounded in thy presence, and abash'd,
 I stand, O king, sunk to this abject state.
 Thus to appear before thee, who hast seen
 My greatness, to appear degraded, fall'n
 Thus low, with shame o'erwhelms me, to the ground
 Fixes my eyes, that dare not look on thee,
 Dare not behold thy face: impute not this
 To hate of thee, but to that grave reserve,
 That female modesty, whose decent laws
 Allow us not the free view of your sex.

POL. No marvel. But in what dost thou require
 My aid? Or wherefore hast thou sent to call me?

HEC. Something in private, that concerns myself,
 To thee and to thy sons I wish t' impart.
 Bid thine attendants from these tents retire.

POL. Retire: this solitude assures me safe.

Friendly to us art thou, friendly to me
The Grecian troops. Now say wherein my pow'r
To thy unhappy state may minister
Relief or ease: warm is my wish to serve thee.

HEC. But tell me first, my son, my Polydore,
Committed by his father's hand, and mine,
To thee and thy good faith, is he alive?

POL. In him at least is fortune kind to thee.

HEC. Honour is in thy words, worthy thyself.

POL. Is there aught else which thou wou'dst wish to know?

HEC. And doth my child remember his poor mother?

POL. He doth; and wish'd to come in secret to thee.

HEC. Is the gold safe, which he from Troy brought with him?

POL. Safe is the treasure, in my house preserv'd.

HEC. Preserve it then, nor covet the rich prize.

POL. That be far from me, in my own wealth blest.

HEC. Know'st thou what I would tell thee and thy sons?

POL. I know not, till thy words declare it to me.

HEC. Be my son lov'd as thou art lov'd by me.

POL. What is it that my sons and I must know?

HEC. Th' old buried treasures of the house of Priam.

POL. Is it thy wish t' inform thy son of these?

HEC. It is, through thee; for sacred is thy faith.

POL. But why the presence of my sons requir'd?

HEC. Better, lest death prevent thee, they should know it.

POL. Well hast thou said, and with more wisdom judg'd.

HEC. Rememb'rest thou in 'Troy Minerva's fane?

POL. Is the gold there? What sign directs the search?

HEC. A black stone rises high, and marks the place.

POL. Touching things there hast thou aught else to tell me?

HEC. To guard the treasures, which I brought with me.

POL. Where these? within thy robes? or how conceal'd?

HEC. Within these tents, amidst the heaps and spoils.

POL. What, in these tents, the Grecians' naval camp?

HEC. The captive dames of Troy have tents apart.

POL. But are they safe? Is there no soldier in them?

HEC. None, not a single Greek, but we alone.

Whilst they with eager haste unfurl their sails,

And every anxious thought is bent on Greece,
Enter; that having done what need requires,
Thou may'st again return with these thy sons,
Where thou hast hospitably lodg'd my son.

SEMICH. Not yet, thou hast not yet receiv'd thy meed;
But with tempestuous speed
Shall vengeance roll thee in the gulf profound,
The hoarse waves roaring round,
Fill thy sad soul with wild affright,
Then plunge thee in eternal night.
This, Justice, is thy stern decree,
And never shall the destin'd head go free.
Dreadful, dreadful ills await;
Bright Hope smiling smooths thy way,
But fallacious leads to fate,
And leaves thy life t' unwarlike hands a prey.

POLYMESTOR, HECUBA, SEMICHORUS.

POL. Ohideous! dark,depriv'd of sight,blind,blind! [*within*.

SEMICH. Heard ye the clamours of the Thracian, friends?

POL. My sons, O horror! they have slain my sons.

SEMICH. Some dreadful deed is done within the tent.

POL. With all your swiftness you shall not escape:
I'll dash the tent down, crush you in your holes.

SEMICH. See, what a weight his strong hand heaves to throw!
Shall we rush on him, since th' occasion calls us
To succour Hecuba, and aid our friends?

HEC. Dash it to pieces, spare not, rend the doors: [*coming forth*.
Yet shalt thou not replace light in thine eyes,
Nor see thy sons alive, whom I have slain.

SEMICH. Hast thou surpris'd, hast thou o'erpow'r'd the Thracian?
Say, lady, hast thou done th' appointed deed?

HEC. Soon shalt thou see him here before the tent;
Blind, with blind steps wheeling his oblique path.
His sons are slain, both slain, the Trojan dames
Assisting my revenge, which now he feels.
See, he advances: distant I withdraw,
Shunning the violence of his boist'rous rage.

- POL. O horrible ! *[coming forth.*
 Where shall I go ? where stand ? where steer my way ?
 Prone like a mountain beast, shall my hands learn
 The task of feet ? Is this my course, or this,
 That I may seize these murderous dames of Troy,
 Who thus have ruin'd me ? Pernicious fiends,
 Ye Phrygians, curses on you ! in what hole
 Hide ye your trembling heads ! O sun, cou'dst thou
 Heal these dark, bleeding orbs, relume their light !
 Hist, hist. I hear the soft tread of these women :
 How then direct my steps to rush on them,
 To tear the savages, to rend them piecemeal,
 And glut my vengeance for the wrongs they've done me ?
 Ah, whither am I borne, leaving my sons
 By these infernal furies to be torn,
 And piecemeal on the mountains cast, to dogs,
 To rav'nous dogs, a mangled, bleeding prey ?
 Whereshall I stand ? whereturn ? wherepoint my steps ?
 For as a ship with all its cables loose,
 Its sails all streaming to the wind, I drive,
 To guard my sons, to that destructive place
 Where murder'd on th' ensanguin'd ground they lie.
- CHOR. Wretch, what a load of misery on thee lies,
 Thy deeds of baseness by th' avenging gods
 With deeds of horror on thy head repaid !
- POL. What, ho ! my Thracians, ho ! To arms, my friends,
 Bestride your fiery steeds, couch your strong spears,
 Haste to my aid, ye valiant sons of Mars !
 Ye Grecians, ho ! Ye sons of Atreus, ho !
 Hola ! hola ! Again I call, hola !
 Quick, I conjure you by the gods, haste, come.
 Hear ye my voice ? Comes no man to my aid ?
 Why are you slow ? These women have destroy'd me,
 These captive women. Oh, 'tis horrible,
 Horrible what I suffer ! Ruin, ruin !
 Ah which way shall I turn me ? whither go ?
 Shall I take wing, and with a lofty flight
 Soar through th' ethereal sky to the high mansions

Where Sirius and Orion from their eyes
Flash the far-beaming blaze of fiery light?
Or plunging through the darksome depths of hell,
Seek a sad refuge, a sad harbour there?

CHOR. When ills oppress beyond our pow'r to bear,
No wonder if we wish relief in death.

AGAMEMNON, POLYMESTOR, HECUBA,
CHORUS.

AGAM. Whence this rude clamour, whose tumultuous noise
Awakes the mountain Echo, and disturbs
Our camp? But that we know the Phrygian tow'rs
Are fallen beneath the conquering arms of Greece,
These hideous outcries might occasion fear.

POL. My royal friend, leader of Greece, I know thee;
Hearing thy voice. Seest thou what I suffer?

AGAM. Ah wretched Polymestor, what rude hand
Hath done this outrage? Who thus gored thine eyes,
And quench'd their sightless orbs? Who slew thy sons?
Unbounded was his rage 'gainst thee and thine.

POL. This ruin, more than ruin, falls on me
From Hecuba, and Phrygia's female slaves.

AGAM. What say'st thou? Hecuba, hast thou done this?
Hath thy bold hand dared this atrocious deed?

POL. Dost thou speak to her? Is she near me then?
Tell me where; guide me to her, that my hands
May seize, rend, mangle all her bleeding limbs.

AGAM. What meanest thou?

POL. Now by the gods I pray thee
Let me but lay my raging hand upon her.

AGAM. Forbear; banish the savage from thy heart,
And calmly speak; that, hearing thee and her,
I may judge justly why these ills befel thee.

POL. Then let me speak. Of Priam's youngest sons,
His son by Hecuba was Polydore.
Him to my charge his father sent from Troy,
Presaging from your arms his country's ruin.
I slew the boy: but for what cause I slew him,

With what sage policy, what forecast, hear.
This youth, thy foe, might people Troy again,
Such were my fears, again might raise its walls:
And should Greece know a son of Priam liv'd,
'Gainst Phrygia their confederate arms once more
Advancing, in their march these fields of Thrace
Might haply ravage; and this region rue,
As now, O king, th' ill neighbourhood of Troy.
When her son's death was known to Hecuba,
With treacherous device she lured me hither,
Feigning I know not what of buried gold,
Treasures conceal'd in Troy, the wealth of Priam:
Then with a specious face of secrecy
Within the tent me only and my sons
Admits: I careless in the midst reclin'd:
Around me, as a friend, familiar sate
Bevies of Trojan dames, and to the light
Held the rich texture of th' Edonian loom,
Praising the curious tissue of my robes;
Others admiring view'd my Thracian spear,
So stript me of my double ornament.
Such as were mothers seem'd with fond regard
T' admire my sons, caress'd them, in their arms
Alternately receiv'd them, till from me
They held them distant; 'midst their blandishments
Suddenly from beneath their robes drew daggers,
And with them stab my sons: me others seize
With hostile violence, my hands, my feet
Lock'd in close grasp; if to protect my sons
I rais'd my head, they held me by the hair;
If I would move my hands, numbers hung on them,
And kept me with their cumbrous weight confin'd.
But their last mischief was a deed of horror
Surpassing savage; for they seize my eyes,
Pierce these poor bleeding orbs, and quench their light,
Then vanish through the tent: I started fierce,
Like a chaf'd tyger, and these murderous hounds
Pursue, along the walls searching my way,

Batt'ring and rending. Studious of thy favour
 I suffer this, and having slain thy foe,
 Imperial Agamemnon. To be brief,
 If any in past times with severe taunts
 Have censur'd women, if now any vents
 His obloquies, or shall hereafter vent,
 In one brief sentence I comprise the whole,
 It is a breed, not all th' extended earth,
 Nor the sea's ample depths produce the like:
 This truth he feels the most, who knows them best.

CHOR. Curb thy intemp'rate tongue, nor with rude speech
 Without distinction thus revile the sex.

Some may be form'd by nature prone to ill,
 But many are illustrious for their virtues.

HEC. Leader of Greece, it ill becomes a man
 With pompous words to decorate his deeds:
 If he hath acted well, well let him speak;
 If ill, shame on his tongue; nor let him clothe
 His base injustice in the garb of virtue:
 Yet these are arts, the vers'd in which are wise;
 But in the end their wisdom fails, and leaves them
 To perish with inevitable ruin.
 To thee this preface. Turn I now to him,
 T' expose the false gloss of his arguments.
 Say'st thou that from redoubled toil to save
 The Grecians, and for Agamemnon's sake,
 Thou slew'st my son? Detested monster, know
 This first, that Greece abhors, and must for ever
 Abhor Barbarians. Studious, thou say'st, of favour:
 What favour, that should prompt thy bloody hand?
 Was some connubial league thy wish? By blood
 Wast thou allied? Or what cause can'st thou plead?
 Would they sail back and ravage the fair fields
 Offlourishing Thrace? Whom can'st thou thus persuade?
 'Twas gold, wou'dst thou speak truth, that slew my son,
 Thy sordid love of lucre. Tell me else,
 While Troy yet flourish'd, while her rampir'd walls
 Defied the fierce assault, while Priam liv'd,

And Hector's strong hand grasp'd his dreaded spear,
 Then, why not then, if studious of his favour,
 When in thy house my son was lodg'd, was cherish'd,
 Didst thou not kill him, or to th' Argive camp
 Bear him alive? But when our adverse fate
 Obscur'd our glory, and the ascending smoke
 Shew'd thee that Troy was fall'n beneath its foes,
 Then thy curs'd hand inhospitably murder'd
 The stranger that sought refuge at thy hearth.
 Nay, further hear me, that thy villainous mind
 May more appear: If to the Greeks a friend,
 This gold, by thy confession his, not thine,
 Thou shou'dst have borne a present to thy friends
 In want, and from their country long estrang'd:
 But hast thou dared to let it from thine hand?
 Is it not now, e'en now, held in thy house?
 Hadst thou protected, hadst thou saved my son,
 As honour dictates, great had been thy glory;
 In adverse hours the friendship of the good
 Shines most; each prosperous day commands its friends.
 Or hadst thou wanted, and his fortune flourish'd,
 My son had been a mighty treasure to thee.
 But now no longer hast thou him a friend,
 Lost is th' enjoyment of the gold, thy sons
 Are lost, and on thy head these ills repaid.
 I tell thee therefore, shou'dst thou favour him,
 Thou, Agamemnon, wilt appear unjust:
 Faith, Honour, Justice, Friendship, Sanctity,
 Which most we wish to serve, he hath profan'd:
 Favour to such will shew that villainies
 Delight.—But we shall not revile our lords.

CHOR. See with what force a just cause always pleads,
 And pours the eloquent tide of words as just!

AGAM. To me ungrateful is the task to judge
 A stranger's ill deeds; but necessity
 Constrains me; for t' engage, then to abandon
 An office unperform'd, I deem a shame.
 Know then that not to me, nor to the Grecians,

Think I this bloody deed design'd a favour.
To seize his gold thou didst it, and now seekest
In thy distress to mould some fair pretext.
Trivial to you the murder of a guest
May be; we Grecians start with horror back
At such a deed of baseness: can I then
Without reproach acquit thee of injustice?
It may not be. Since thou hast dared to do
Dishonourable deeds, th' unwelcome bear.

POL. What! from these wretches shall I suffer thus,
Defeated by a woman and a slave?

HEC. Thy acts of baseness justice thus repays.

POL. Ah, wretch! My sons, my sons! Oh my lost sight!

HEC. And dost thou feel it, savage? Yet thou thoughtest
I had no feeling for my slaughter'd son.

POL. Dost thou exult in mischiefs thou hast wrought?

HEC. Aveng'd on thee how can I but exult?

POL. Not so, when soon thee shall the briny wave——

HEC. What! will he steer me to the Grecian coast?

POL. Close, eddying round thee from the high mast fall n.

HEC. What violence shall urge this desperate leap?

POL. Spontaneous shalt thou climb its utmost height.

HEC. How climb, unless on rapid wings upborne?

POL. Chang'd to a dog, thy fierce eyes glaring fire.

HEC. Of this my change from whence art thou inform'd?

POL. The oracle of Thrace foretold us this.

HEC. The ills thou sufferest did it not foretell?

POL. I had not by thy wiles been then ensnar'd.

HEC. In life or death shall I fulfil this fate?

POL. In death, and on thy tomb thy name survive.

HEC. How? from my change deriv'd? Be less abstruse.

POL. From thence deriv'd, a mark to mariners.

HEC. It moves me not, since thus aveng'd on thee.

POL. Cassandra too, thy daughter, she must die.

HEC. Thy prophecies on thy head! My soul disdains them.

POL. Slain by his wife, stern guardian of her house.

HEC. Daughter of Tyndarus, not such her rage.

POL. She wields the axe, the slaughter'd husband falls.

AGAM. Dost thou not rave, and covet further ills?

POL. Kill me, the bloody bath at Argos waits thee.

AGAM. Hence with him, slaves, far hence; force him away.

POL. What, art thou gall'd to hear it?

AGAM. Stop his mouth.

POL. Stop it, the word is spoke.

AGAM. Away with him,

Haste, cast the dreamer on some desert isle;

There let him vent his frenetic insolence.

And now, thou wretched mother, haste thee hence,

The funeral rites for both thy dead prepare.

You, dames of Troy, go to your masters' tents.

Soft rise the winds, and favour our return.

Escap'd these ills, may we revisit safe

Our native land, and taste domestic joys!

CHOR. Go to the harbour, to the tents, my friends,

There to receive our masters' harsh commands,

Relentless is thy pow'r, Necessity.

HELENA.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

HELENA

TEUCER

MENELAUS

THEONOE

THEOCLYMENUS

MESSENGERS

ATTENDANTS

CASTOR and POLLUX

CHORUS of GRECIAN VIRGINS.

HELENA.

THE celebrated Helena, whose fatal beauty and disloyalty to her husband occasioned the destruction of Troy, and a long series of calamities to Greece, is here represented as an innocent and injured woman, a faithful, affectionate, and generous wife. This required management. Herodotus relates, that he had heard from the Priests in Egypt that Paris, returning with his prize from Sparta to Troy, was driven by a storm into Canopus, one of the mouths of the Nile; that he was seized there, and carried before Proteus, then king of the country, and the most just of mortals, who severely rebuked him for his perfidy, and violation of the laws of hospitality, and commanded him with menaces to quit his dominions within three days; but he detained Helena and the treasures, which they had brought from Sparta, that he might restore them to the injured Menelaus. The Grecians sailed to Asia with a great armament. Priam in vain protested that neither Helena nor the treasures were brought to Troy: he was not believed: the city was besieged, taken, and destroyed. Menelaus, as he was sailing back to Greece, was driven to Egypt; there he found and received his wife and the treasures. *Herod. Euterpe.* This story, the contrivance probably of Helena and the Egyptian priests, was embellished by Stesichorus with the poetical fiction which Euripides has followed in this tender and agreeable drama.

Ancient Poetry seems to have been delighted with these aerial images, and to have claimed the privilege of creating them at will : Homer and Virgil employed them ; but by none has the fiction been so agreeably pursued as by our Spenser in his snowy Florimel, Fairy Queen, Book iii. Canto viii. which surpassed even the true ;

As guileful Goldsmith that, by secret skill,
 With golden foyl doth finely overspread
 Some baser metal, which commend he will
 Unto the vulgar for good gold insted,
 He much more goodly gloss thereon doth shed,
 To hide his falsehood, than if it were trow :
 So hard this Idol was to be ared,
 That Florimel herself in all men's view
 She seem'd to pass : so forged things do fairest shew.

Book iv. c. v. 15.

The Grecian deities formed their images of air, into which they vanished again ; but Spenser's magic made use of other materials ; the workmanship is beautifully described ; and as the principal substance

Was purest Snow in massie mould congeal'd,
 his fine imagination contrived to dissolve her with wonderful judgment and propriety, Book v. Canto iii. 23. &c.

So forth the noble lady was ybrought,
 Adorn'd with honour and all comely grace, &c.

Then did he set her by that snowy one,
 Like the true Saint beside the Image set ;
 Of both their beauties to make paragone,
 And tryal, whether should the honour get.
 Straightway so soon as both together met,

Th' enchanted Damzell vanisht into nought :
Her snowy substance melted as with heat,
Ne of that goodly hew remained ought,
But th' empty girdle, which about her waste was wrought.

As when the Daughter of Thaumantes fair
Hath in a wat'ry cloud displayed wide
Her goodly bow, which paints the liquid air,
That all men wonder at her colours pride ;
All suddenly, ere one can look aside,
The glorious picture vanisheth away,
Ne any token doth thereof abide :
So did his Ladies goodly form decay,
And into nothing go, ere one could it bewray.

The Scene is in the island of Pharos, beside the
tomb of Proteus, and before the palace of Theocly-
menus.



HELENA.

HEL. THESE are the streams of Nile, the joy of Nymphs
Glowing with beauty's radiance; he his floods
Swell'd with the melted snow o'er Egypt's plain
Irrigous pours, to fertilize her fields,
Th' ethereal rain supplying. Of these realms
Proteus was lord, and, whilst he liv'd, his seat
Fix'd in the isle of Pharos, and was king
Of Egypt. Of the Nereid train a nymph
He wedded, Psamathe, before betroth'd
To Æolus: by her he had a son
Nam'd Theoclymenus, for that his life
He pass'd the gods revering: and his bed
Was with one daughter bless'd of form divine,
Her mother's pride, and in her infant age
Eidothea nam'd; but when advancing years

2. Anaxagoras ascribed the swelling of the Nile to the melting of the snow in Ethiopia; which opinion his scholar Euripides followed:

Νείλου λιπῶν κάλλισαν ἐκ γαίης ὕδαρ,

Ὅς ἐκ μελαμβρόταισιν πληῖται ῥοῶς

Αἰθιοπίδος γῆς, ἥνικ' ἄν σακῆ χιῶν. *Diodor. Sic. l. 1.*

7. High o'er a gulphy sea, the Pharian isle

Fronts the deep roar of disemboguing Nile. *Odyss. iv. Fenton.*

"Against the city (Alexandria) stands the isle of Pharos, which was joined to
"the continent by a bridge—In a promontory thereof on a rock environed by
"the sea, Philadelphus caused a tower to be built of a wonderful height;
"ascended by degrees, and having many lanterns at the top, wherein lights burned
"nightly for a direction to such as sailed by sea. For the coasts upon both sides
"being rockie, low, and harbourlesse, could not otherwise be approached without
"eminent danger.—This had the repute of the world's seventh wonder, named
"after the name of the island. At this day a general name for such as serve to
"that purpose." *Sandys.*

10. Perhaps to Æacus. See Dr. Musgrave's note.

15. See Dr. Musgrave's note. Under the name of Eidothoe she addresses Menelaus, *Odyss. iv. 366.*

Matur'd her wisdom, she by all is call'd
 Theonoe, for things divine she knew
 Present and future; this enlight'ning grace
 From Nereus she receiv'd, her mother's sire.
 But I from Sparta draw my birth, a realm
 To glory not unknown, of royal race,
 Daughter of Tyndarus: but fame reports
 That Jove, the silver plumage of a swan
 Assuming, to my mother Leda's breast,
 T' effect his fraudulent purpose, wing'd his flight
 From the pursuing eagle, if in this
 Report speaks truth, and Helena my name.
 The ills, which I have suffer'd, let me speak.
 Three rival goddesses to Paris came
 Amid th' umbrageous groves of Ida, Juno,
 And Venus, and the virgin sprung from Jove,
 Willing his judgment should decide the prize
 Of beauteous form: but Venus to his arms
 My beauty, for what most is beauteous oft
 Is most unhappy, promis'd, and receives
 The prize. To Sparta from his pastoral huts
 Th' Idæan Paris came, as to obtain
 My bed; but Juno, for her slighted form
 Indignant, frustrates his fond hope, and gives
 Not me, but what resembling me she fram'd,
 A breathing image of ethereal air,
 To royal Priam's son; and me he deem'd,
 Delusive thought, his prize, who ne'er was his.
 But from these ills the purposes of Jove
 Accomplish'd their event; for 'twixt the realms
 Of Greece and wretched Phrygia wasteful war
 He kindled, of the numbers of mankind
 To ease the burden'd earth, and raise to fame
 The bravest of the Grecians. I was made,

48. So the Scholiast on Homer, *Iliad* i. 5. but it is proper to observe, that the unrighteousness of men is there assigned as the cause of the Earth's complaint, *μηδμημιᾶς ἀνθρώπων εὐσεβείας*.

Not I, my name was made the prize of war
'Twixt the contending spears of Troy and Greece.
But me receiving in the air that wreath'd
Around me, in a cloud conceal'd, (for Jove
Was not regardless of me,) to the house
Of Proteus Hermes bore me, for he deem'd
Of mortals him the justest, that the bed
Of Menelaus unstain'd I might preserve ;
And here I am: but my unhappy lord
Chases the spoiler, and with troops in arms
Vengeful advances to the tow'rs of Troy;
And for my sake beside Scamander's streams
Have many died; and I, sustaining all
The hateful charge, with curses on my head,
Am deem'd a wanton, faithless to my lord,
And to have kindled this great war for Greece.
Why bear I then to live? I heard the god
Declaring that once more th' illustrious realms
Of Sparta I should visit, with my lord
There to reside, this knowing that to Troy
I never came: such the prophetic word
Of Hermes, that no stain my bed receive.
Whilst Proteus view'd the beams of this bright sun,
I from constraint was safe; but when he lay
In the dark tomb, the son of the deceas'd
To wed me urges with impetuous warmth.
But I, my former husband honouring,
A suppliant at this tomb of Proteus fall,
That he would guard my bed; that if through Greece
I bear an infamous and hated name,
My person here may not receive a stain.

TEUCER, HELENA.

TEUC. Who is the lord of this strong-rampir'd house?
It seems the stately residence of wealth:

77. Tombs, as well as altars, were held sacred; and it was unlawful to take the suppliant from them by force.

The cornice and the well-wrought battlements
Denote a royal mansion.—O ye gods,
What do mine eyes behold ! I see a form,
The image of that hated, baleful wretch,
Whose fatal charms on me, and all the Greeks,
Brought ruin. May the gods, so much thy shape
Resembles Helen, hate thee ! Were I not
In a strange land, I with this well-aim'd stone
Would crush thee for thy likeness to that pest,
The Spartan born of Jove, that thou shou'dst die.

HEL. Why, unkind stranger, hold me in disdain ?
Why hate me for the mischiefs wrought by her ?

TEUC. I have offended, lady, and giv'n way
More than I ought, to anger ; for all Greece
The Jove-born Helen in abhorrence holds :
Let me obtain forgiveness for my words.

HEL. Who art thou ? In this country whence arriv'd ?

TEUC. I, lady, of th' unhappy Greeks am one.

HEL. No marvel then if Helena thou hate.
But say, who art thou ? whence ? who gave thee birth ?

TEUC. My name is Teucer ; Telamon my sire ;
From sea-girt Salamis I drew my birth.

HEL. Why dost thou tread these cultur'd fields of Nile ?

TEUC. A wand'ring exile, from my country driv'n.

HEL. Unhappy must thou be : who drove thee out ?

TEUC. My father. Who should more have been a friend ?

HEL. What cause ? for misery attends the deed.

TEUC. For that my brother, Ajax, died at Troy.

HEL. How died he ? by thy sword depriv'd of life ?

TEUC. On his own sword he rush'd, and died self-slain.

HEL. Through madness ? for nought else could urge such deed.

TEUC. Achilles, son of Peleus, didst thou know ?

HEL. A suitor once of Helena, they say.

TEUC. His death a contest kindled for his arms.

HEL. And how to Ajax this the cause of ill ?

TEUC. Griev'd that another gain'd the arms, he died.

HEL. Thee doth th' infection of his suff'rings reach ?

TEUC. That for his sake with him I did not die.

- HEL. Stranger, to Troy's fam'd tow'rs didst thou advance?
TEUC. With Greece I storm'd them, and myself am fall'n.
HEL. Is Troy then fall'n, with hostile flames consum'd?
TEUC. That of her rampires not a trace remains.
HEL. Ill-fated Helena, Troy falls for thee.
TEUC. And Greece too bleeds: such dreadful ills are wrought.
HEL. How long in ashes hath the city sunk?
TEUC. Sev'n fruitful years have well nigh roll'd their course.
HEL. How long sate Greece before the walls of Troy?
TEUC. The moon for ten long years increas'd and waned.
HEL. Seiz'd you amidst the spoil the Spartan dame?
TEUC. Her Menelaus dragg'd by the locks away.
HEL. Saw'st thou the wretch, or speak'st thou by report?
TEUC. Plain as I see thee, lady, her I saw.
HEL. Take heed, lest some illusion from the gods—
TEUC. Of something else discourse, of her no more.
HEL. Are you of this opinion so assur'd?
TEUC. I saw her with these eyes, my mind now sees her.
HEL. Return'd, is she with Menelaus at home?
TEUC. Neither at Argos, nor by Sparta's streams.
HEL. Ah, this is ill to whom thou speak'st the ill.
TEUC. He with his wife, so fame reports, is lost.
HEL. Sail'd you not all at the same time for Greece?
TEUC. We did: but wide a storm dispers'd the fleet.
HEL. Driv'n o'er the billows of what swelling deep?
TEUC. Passing the middle of th' Ægean sea.
HEL. Knows none that safely Menelaus arriv'd?
TEUC. None: but through Greece report proclaims his death.
HEL. Unhappy me! But lives the Thestian dame?
TEUC. Of Leda is thy question? She is dead.
HEL. With sorrow sunk for Helena's ill fame?
TEUC. Her noble hands the fatal noose prepar'd.
HEL. The sons of Tyndarus, are they alive?
TEUC. Dead, and not dead: of them are two reports.
HEL. Tell me the best. Ah, me, what woes are mine!
TEUC. Fame says that, stars resembling, they are gods.
HEL. This to the ear is grateful: what the other?
TEUC. That for their sister's infamy they died

By their own hands. Of this enough; for twice
I would not sigh. But to this royal house
I come, the fate-foretelling nymph to see,
Theonoe: in this a stranger aid,
That from her voice oracular I may learn
To speed my flying sails across the main
To sea-girt Cyprus, where Apollo's voice,
Giv'n from his shrine, commanded me to dwell,
Calling my city from the island's name,
In honour of my country, Salamis.

HEL. Thy sails with speed will find their easy course.
But leave this country, stranger; quickly fly,
E'er by the son of Proteus thou art seen,
The monarch of the land; for absent now
Against the bleeding savages he cheers
His dogs of chase: for he to death devotes
Each Grecian stranger whom he seizes here.
But for what cause enquire not thou; and I
Am silent; speaking what should I avail thee?

TEUC. I thank thee, lady, for thy courtesy;
And may the gods reward thee. Though thou bearest
The form of Helena, thou hast a mind
Unlike: but may she perish, and ne'er reach
The fields through which Eurotas rolls his streams:
But blessings, lady, ever wait on thee.

HEL. To what a piteous state of mighty woe
Am I now sunk? To what desponding strain
Shall I attune my struggling griefs, and pour
At each sad pause the tear, the sigh, the groan?

STRO. 1. Ye earth-born virgins, spread the wing,
Hither, ye sister Sirens, fly;
The Lybian reed, the sweet pipe bring,
Attuned to mournful melody,
Tears, to my streaming tears that well,
And griefs, to my impassion'd griefs that swell.

188. It was not unusual to adorn the tombs of the dead with images of the Sirens. Helena, standing at the tomb of Proteus, may be supposed to have these images before her eyes. See Dr. Musgrave's notes.

And thou, dread Empress of the realms below,
 Send notes attemper'd to my notes of woe,
 To Death, to Death a dismal strain,
 Such now my anguish'd soul will cheer,
 That, pleas'd, in Pluto's dark domain
 The Pæan to the dead the dead may hear.

ANTISTROPHE 1.

CHOR. I chanc'd the azure stream beside,
 Along its verdant fringe of reeds,
 To spread the rich vests' purple pride,
 And o'er the grass-attired meads,
 Warm'd by the bright sun's golden rays
 That with fresh grace their vermeil dies might blaze:
 There pity-moving sorrow reach'd my ear,
 And ev'ry note breath'd anguish and despair:
 Such are the wailing Naiad's sighs,
 When her lost love the nymph bemoans;
 He roving o'er the mountains flies,
 Pan's cavern'd rocks re-echo to her groans.

STROPHE 2.

HEL. Virgins of Greece, borne thence a prey
 By the barbaric oar,
 One from Achaia to this shore
 Hath plough'd the wat'ry way:
 Griefs to my griefs, and tears to tears,
 He bears, ah me! the stranger bears.
 Troy hath bow'd her tow'ring head,
 Sunk beneath the hostile flame;
 Many, many are the dead
 For me, for me, and my destructive name
 The fatal noose hath Leda tied,
 Through grief at my disgrace she died.
 Whilst my lov'd lord the ocean braves,

200. The reader may remember a similar picture of ancient manners in the Hippolytus, l. 131.

He sinks beneath the ruthless waves.
 Low in the tomb is Castor laid,
 And my lost brother I deplore ;
 Their country's double glory is no more,
 Fall'n, fall'n, they sink among the dead.
 His fiery steed no more he reins ;
 No more in youthful exercise
 Around the dusty course he flies,
 Or thunders o'er Eurotas' sedgy plains.

ANTISTROPHE 2.

CHOR. Ah, lady, what a life of woes
 Doth fate to thee assign !
 Thine is the sigh, the tear is thine :
 Thy life affliction knows,
 Thy hapless life, e'en from the hour
 Thy mother felt Jove's fraudulent pow'r ;
 He, conspicuous to the sight,
 Came a beauteous swan in show,
 Wheeling down th' ethereal height,
 And o'er her bosom wav'd his wings of snow.
 Is there an ill thou hast not known ?
 Is there a suff'ring not thine own ?
 Thy mother sinks beneath her fate ;
 No joys the sons of Jove await :
 Thine eyes thy country view no more.
 Through the wide world report hath spread
 That, honour'd lady, on a wanton bed
 Thou revell'st on a foreign shore.
 Thy lord from life's lov'd light is torn,
 His livid corse the wild waves beat :
 Thou shalt no more thy royal seat,
 No more Minerva's brazen dome adorn.

255. This temple was erected on the highest eminence in Sparta : it was begun by Tyndarus ; the building was carried on by his sons, and afterwards finished by the Lacedemonians, οἱ πολλοῖς ἔτισιν ὕψιστον τὸν τιναὶν ὁμοίως καὶ ἄγαλμα ἐποίησαντο Ἀθηνᾶς χαλκῆν. From this temple Minerva had at Sparta the name of Χαλκίαικος. *Pausanias, Lacon.*

EPODE.

HEL.

Was he some Phrygian swain,
 Or one that drew from Greece his line,
 Who hew'd at Troy the fatal pine,
 Whence Priam's son, with fate his foe,
 Built his tall vessel fraught with woe,
 Then launch'd it on the main,
 And plying his barbaric oar,
 By my unhappy beauty led,
 Ambitious to obtain my bed
 Plough'd his bold way to Sparta's shore?
 This, wily Venus, was thy dreadful deed,
 Devoting Greece and Troy to bleed.

Ah me, the starting tear !
 But Juno from her golden throne
 Sent the wing'd son of Maia down,
 Who, as I crop the blooming rose,
 And in my folded robe inclose,
 The grateful sweets to bear
 To Pallas in her brazen shrine,
 Me through the yielding air convey'd
 And in this unblest'd country laid,
 A contest, such the will divine,
 A fatal contest, to destroy
 Th' unhappy sons of Greece and Troy ;
 Whilst on the banks of Simois my name
 Is vainly sounded by malignant fame.

CHOR. Great are, I know, thy sufferings: but to bear
 Patient and calm the necessary ills
 Of life, is now of highest import to thee.

HEL. To what a fate, lov'd virgins, am I yok'd?
 Was not my birth a prodigy to men?
 For never Grecian or Barbaric dame
 From the white shell her young ones gave to light,

288. This is in due order: as Jupiter descended on Leda in the form a Swan, the lady brought forth two Eggs; from one of which Pollux and Helena were produced, from the other Castor and Clytemnestra: the Swan, as was meet, was placed among the stars.

As Leda brought me forth, fame says, to Jove.
My life too is a prodigy, and all
The sufferings of my life; from Juno some,
Of some my beauty is th' unhappy cause.
Oh that, like some fair figure which beneath
The painter's pencil on the canvas glows,
This beauty were erased, and I might take
A form less graceful, that each circumstance
Of ill, which now attends me, might be sunk
Deep in oblivion, and that Greece might hold
What is not ill in memory, as she now
Holds what is ill. He, whom the gods afflict,
His sad thoughts though a single suffering claims,
Feels its weight heavy, yet perforce must bear it:
But I with many sufferings am weigh'd down;
First, though my life is pure from guilt, my name
Is infamous; this ill, the charge of crimes
From which the soul is free, is more severe
Than what from truth arises. Next, the gods
Me from my country have remov'd, and plac'd
'Midst barb'rous manners, where, of friends depriv'd,
I, from the free who draw my gen'rous blood,
Am made a slave; for 'mongst barbarians all
Are slaves, save one. The anchor, which alone
Sustain'd my fortunes, that in time my lord
Would come and free me from these ills, is lost;
For he is dead, he views this light no more.
My mother too is dead, her murderer I,
Wrong was the cause indeed, but mine the wrong.
She, who was born the glory of my house,
My daughter, wastes the bloom of youth away
Unwedded: and the twin-born sons of Jove
Are now no more. With miseries thus oppress'd
I in each circumstance of life am lost,
But not in deed. This now remains, my last
Of sufferings, to my country if once more
I should return, they would confine me, close
Imprison'd, thinking me that Helena

Who came with Menelaus from conquer'd Troy.
But were my husband living, I should soon
By symbols only to each other known
Be recogniz'd: but now that cannot be,
And never to me shall he safe return.
Why longer live I then? To what a fate
Am I reserv'd? Should I, in sad exchange
Of present ills these nuptials choosing, sit
With a barbarian at a table piled
With costly viands? When the wife endures
Th' ungentle converse of an husband rude
In manners, in his person rude, to die
Were rather to be wish'd. But how to die,
My honour not debas'd? The pendent cord
Disgraces, e'en in slaves it is deem'd base:
But there is something noble by the sword
To fall, though painful: but to quit this life
Behoves me now, so deep am I ingulf'd
In ills. To glorious fortune others rise
By beauty, but my ruin it hath wrought.

CHOR. Think not this stranger, queen, whoe'er he is,
In all he told thee form'd his words to truth.

HEL. Yet clearly did he say my lord is dead.

CHOR. Many reports by falsehood are devis'd.

HEL. And many by the light of truth are clear.

CHOR. More to despond than hope thy soul is bent.

HEL. My apprehensions throw this terror round me.

CHOR. Art thou with kindness in this house receiv'd?

HEL. All, save my violent wooer, are my friends.

CHOR. Know'st thou what thou must do then? Quit this tomb.

HEL. To what doth thy discourse, thy counsel tend?

CHOR. Enter this house, and her who all things knows,
The daughter of the Nereid, sea-born nymph,
Theonoe, consult, if yet thy lord
Lives, or hath left the light: of this inform'd,
Such as thy fortunes are, indulge thy joy
Or grief; for e'er thou art of aught assur'd,
Why shou'dst thou sink in sorrow? Be advis'd;

Go from this tomb, and with the virgin hold
 Instructive converse; all things thou may'st know
 From her, and in this house be taught the truth;
 Why then look further? Willingly thy steps
 Shall I attend, and from the virgin hear
 Her heav'n taught answers. Thus a woman ought
 With friendly aid to share a woman's cares.

HEL. Yes; your advice, dear virgins, I receive:
 Enter then, enter; that within this house
 All my distresses you, with me, may hear.

CHOR. To one not faintly willing is thy call.

HEL. Ah me, th' unhappy day! Ah wretched me!
 What sad, what mournful tidings shall I hear!

CHOR. Do not, dear lady, do not thus, in thought
 Presaging ill, anticipate thy griefs.

HEL. What hath he suffer'd, my unhappy lord?
 Sees he the light of heav'n, yon golden sun
 That rolls his radiant chariot, and the stars
 Holding their nightly course, or with the dead
 Hath he beneath the earth his gloomy fate?

CHOR. Whate'er shall come with better hope await.

HEL. Thee I invoke, Eurotas, thy full stream
 Who 'midst the green reeds rollest, thee adjure,
 If this report of my lord's death be true,—

CHOR. Why dost thou rave?

HEL. Around my neck I'll wreathe
 The strangling cord, or with mine own hand drive,
 Deep in this flesh will drive the slaught'ring sword,
 A victim to the rivals of the skies,
 And to th' Idæan shepherd, whose sweet pipe
 Once 'midst the herds of Priam was attuned.

CHOR. On others fall these ills: but be thou blest.

HEL. Unhappy Troy, thy tow'rs are sunk in dust
 For deeds which never were committed; great
 And terrible thy sufferings. For my charms,
 O Venus, much of blood, and many tears
 Have stream'd; to sorrows sorrows, tears to tears,
 Hath misery added. Mothers mourn their sons,

And virgins, sisters to the slain, their locks
 Along Scamander's Phrygian stream have shorn.
 Greece too hath heard the cry, the cry of woe,
 In mournful notes resounding through her towns,
 And beat her head, and rent her bleeding cheeks.
 How happy was thy fate, Arcadian nymph,
 Callisto, mounting once the bed of Jove!
 More happy than my mother's was thy fate,
 Chang'd to a lioness, with shaggy hair
 And glaring eyes; thou in that savage form
 Didst lose thy griefs. She too, whom from her train
 An hind with horns of gold Diana chas'd,
 Daughter of Merops of Titanian race,
 Chas'd for her beauty: but my fatal charms
 Have laid the tow'rs of Dardan Troy in dust,
 And ruin'd, ah! have ruin'd bleeding Greece.

MENELAUS.

O Pelops, who the contest didst sustain
 At Pisa once, victorious o'er the car
 Of proud Cœnomaus by four coursers whirl'd,
 Would thou hadst perish'd, when thy flesh was carv'd
 To feast the gods, and 'mongst them left thy life,
 E'er my sire Atreus drew this vital air,
 Thy son, who by Aërope gave birth
 To royal Agamemnon, and to me
 His brother, Menelaus, a noble pair.
 The greatest host that ever march'd in arms,
 This without vaunting I may speak, he led
 Ploughing the wat'ry way to Troy; his pow'r
 Force gain'd not, but the willing sons of Greece
 Obey'd their chief. Of these I might recount
 Some now no more, and some that from the sea

410. The form of a bear is uniformly assigned to Callisto: nor is it easy to say why Euripides changes her to a lioness. Carmeli suspects a corruption of the text.

413. Of this fable no clear relation remains: we are only told that the lady's name was Co, and that the island Cos received its name from her.

With joy escap'd, and of the dead the names
Bear with them home. But on the swelling wave
Of the blue sea, e'er since the tow'rs of Troy
I levell'd with the ground, have I been tost
Unhappy, and desirous to review
My native country, by the gods am deem'd
Unworthy of that grace. The dreary wilds
Of Lybia, and inhospitable bays
All have I past; and when my bark approach'd
Nigh to my country, back the adverse winds
Impetuous drove it, and no fav'ring gale
Hath fill'd my sails to waft me home to Greece.
And now unhappy, shipwreck'd, reft of friends,
I on this land am cast, against the rocks
Oft toss'd my shatter'd galley is a wreck,
And of her well-compacted planks the keel
Alone remains, in which I reach'd the shore
By unexpected fortune, scarce escaped,
And with me Helena brought back from Troy.
But of this country what the name, and who
Th' inhabitants, I know not; for through shame
I shunn'd the converse of the many, prompt
To question me of this my wretched garb,
My fortunes shame concealing. When a man
Of high estate from all his glories sinks,
New to distress he feels his wretched fall
With keener anguish than one long inur'd
To misery. But want afflicts me now:
I have nor food nor raiment, proof of this
Are these poor cov'rings, relicks of my ship
Cast on the shore; for all my former robes,
My radiant vests, the pride of gorgeous wealth,
The sea hath swallow'd. In a secret cave
My wife, the fatal cause of all my ills,
Concealing, and my friends, what few remain,
Charging to guard my bed, alone I stray,
Seeking to furnish them with what their wants
Demand, if haply I may find supplies.

Seeing this house with lofty battlements
 Embellish'd, and its stately gates, which speak
 A rich man's mansion, hither am I come;
 For there is hope that from a wealthy house
 Something may for my mariners be gain'd;
 But those, who live in penury, have nought,
 Had they the will to give distress relief.
 Who keeps the gate, ho! from the house who comes,
 The story of my miseries to relate?

Old female SERVANT, MENELAUS.

- SERV. Who art thou at the gate? Wilt thou not hence,
 Nor, standing at the portal, to our lords
 Give high offence? Or thou wilt die, from Greece
 Thy birth deriv'd: no Grecian hence returns.
- MEN. Well, aged dame, in all this hast thou said.
 Might I—I will obey:—yet might I speak.
- SERV. Begone; for, stranger, this on me is charg'd,
 That none of Grecian birth approach this house.
- MEN. Lift not thine hand, nor drive me hence by force.
- SERV. Thou heed'st not what I say: thine is the blame.
- MEN. Return into the house, and tell thy lords—
- SERV. Ill would it be for thee to tell thy words.
- MEN. I come a stranger, wreck'd; such none abuse.
- SERV. Go now from hence, and seek some other house.
- MEN. No: I will enter here; do thou comply.
- SERV. Thou'rt troublesome: force soon will drive thee hence.
- MEN. Ah me, ah me, where now my glorious hosts!
- SERV. 'Mongst them thou might'st be honour'd, but not here.
- MEN. O fortune, what unworthy insult this!
- SERV. What piteous sorrow dews thine eyes with tears?
- MEN. Remembrance of my former happy state.
- SERV. Hence then, and to thy friends present thy tears.
- MEN. What country this, and whose this royal house?
- SERV. Proteus dwells here, and Egypt is the land.
- MEN. Egypt! O misery, whither am I driv'n!
- SERV. Why dost thou charge the race of Nile with blame?
- MEN. I blame them not: my fortune I lament.

SERV. Many feel sorrows, and not thou alone.

MEN. But is the king thou namest in the house?

SERV. This is his tomb: his son is Egypt's lord.

MEN. Where is he? in the house, or absent hence?

SERV. Absent, but to the Greeks a ruthless foe.

MEN. And what the cause, whose sad effects I feel?

SERV. Helena, sprung from Jove, is in this house.

MEN. How say'st thou? What thy word? Speak it again.

SERV. The daughter of the Spartan Tyndarus.

MEN. Whence comes she? Much I marvel what this means.

SERV. Hither from Lacedemon's realm she came.

MEN. When?—Is my wife borne from the cave away?

SERV. Before the Grecians, stranger, march'd to Troy.

But haste thee from the gate; for in this house
Distraction reigns, all is confusion here.

In an ill time thou comest: should my lord
Here seize thee, all thy welcome will be death.
I to the Grecians am a friend, though rude
The words I gave thee; but I fear my lord.

MEN. What can I say? What can I think? A train
Of present ills added to former ills

Surrounds me, if I reach this land from Troy
Leading my wife, and in the cavern'd rock

She safe is guarded, and another here

Bearing her name hath in this royal house

Her habitation. But the aged dame

Said that she sprung from Jove: is there a man

Upon the banks of Nile, who bears the name

Of Jove? for he, that reigns in heav'n, is one.

Where in the world is Sparta, but alone

Where 'midst his reeds his beauteous-winding stream

Eurotas rolls? The name of Tyndarus

Is singly known to fame. And where the land

That bears with Lacedemon and with Troy

Like names? In truth I know not what to say.

But various men, it seems, in various lands

Have the same name, and various towns with towns,

With women women: nought in this is strange;

Nor for the servant's menace will I fly:
 For there is no man of that barbarous soul,
 Hearing my name, who will not give me food.
 The flames of Troy are through the world renown'd,
 And Menelaus, who greatly kindled them,
 Is in no land unknown: I then will wait
 The coming of the king: yet this requires
 A double caution: if his soul be fierce
 And savage, to my wreck'd bark I will speed
 Myself concealing; if he aught disclose
 Of gentle manners, I will ask such aid
 As suits my present wretched circumstance.
 This in my miseries is of all my ills
 The greatest; that of other kings, myself
 A king, I beg the poor supplies of life,
 But hard necessity constrains: not mine
 This saying, but the sentence of the sage,
 Nothing is stronger than Necessity.

MENELAUS, CHORUS.

CHOR. From the prophetic virgin, as her voice
 Within the royal house disclos'd the fates,
 I heard that Menelaus hath not yet sunk
 To the dark shades of Erebus, entomb'd
 In earth, but on the boist'rous billows tost
 Hath not yet reach'd the harbours of his country,
 His life with wand'rings wretched, of his friends
 Bereft, and driv'n to many a distant shore,
 As in his bark he ploughs his way from Troy.

HELENA, MENELAUS, CHORUS.

HEL. I to this hallow'd tomb again return
 My seat resuming, from Theonoe,
 Who all things knows, in truths that joy my soul
 Instructed; for she says my husband lives,
 And views the light of heav'n, but wand'ring wide,
 And tost o'er various seas; nor will he come
 Unexercis'd in ills, whene'er his toils

Shall find an end. One thing she did not say,
If safe he should return; this I forbore
Plainly to ask, transported with my joy
That he is safe. She said too that e'en now
He to this place is nigh, wreck'd on this coast,
With a few friends. Oh, wou'dst thou come to me,
As thy arrival is my soul's warm wish!—
Ah, who is this? Am I in secret toils
Insnares, here planted by the impious son
Of Proteus? With a courser's eager speed,
Or like a bounding Thyad, to the tomb
Shall I not spring? Of rude and savage look
Is he, who lies in wait to seize me here.

MEN. Thou, who with terror wing'd dost urge thy flight
To the tomb's base, and its ascending flames,
Stay: wherefore dost thou fly? That form, just shewn,
Strikes me with wonder and astonishment.

HEL. O virgins, I am injur'd, by this man
Kept from the tomb by force; his base design
To seize me, and deliver to his lord,
The tyrant from whose nuptials I am fled.

MEN. I am no ruffian, none to mischief hired.

HEL. Nay, e'en the weeds, that clothe thy limbs, are base.

MEN. Stay thy swift foot, and lay thy fears aside.

HEL. I stay, now I have reach'd this hallow'd place.

MEN. Who art thou? What a form do I behold!

HEL. And who art thou? like thee am I in doubt.

MEN. Such a resemblance ne'er did I behold.

HEL. Ye gods! For 'tis a god t' agnize our friends.

MEN. Art thou of Greece, or native of this land?

HEL. Of Greece: thy country too I wish to know.

MEN. Thou, lady, hast the form of Helena.

HEL. And thou of Menelaus. I stand amaz'd.

MEN. Rightly a wretched man dost thou avow.

HEL. To thy wife's arms at length art thou return'd?

MEN. What wife? Stand off, thou shalt not touch my vests.

HEL. Whom Tyndarus, my father, gave to thee.

MEN. Light-bearing Hecate, send friendly visions.

- HEL. Thou seest no phantom of her nightly train.
 MEN. I am not, sure, the husband of two wives.
 HEL. What other wife hath right to call thee lord?
 MEN. She, whom the cave conceals, from Phrygia brought.
 HEL. It is not so: thou hast no wife, but me.
 MEN. Have I my sense? Or is mine eye deceiv'd?
 HEL. What, seeing me dost thou not see thy wife?
 MEN. The form is like: but I want certain proof.
 HEL. What proof? reflect: who better knows than thou?
 MEN. Thou hast her form; that I shall not deny.
 HEL. Who shall inform thee better than thine eyes?
 MEN. Here lies the doubt, I have another wife.
 HEL. I never went to Troy; my image went.
 MEN. Who could with imbreath'd life an image frame?
 HEL. The Æther, whence thou hast an heav'n-form'd wife.
 MEN. Form'd by what god? Thy words surpass belief.
 HEL. By Juno; me that Paris might not gain.
 MEN. Here and at Troy at once how cou'dst thou be?
 HEL. This of my name, not person, could be true.
 MEN. Let me be gone; I came with griefs enough.
 HEL. Me for an empty image wilt thou leave?
 MEN. And fare thou well, since thou art like my wife.
 HEL. Ah, I receive, but not retain my lord!
 MEN. To this my great toils past, not thou, constrain.
 HEL. Was ever woman such a wretch as I?
 My dearest friends forsake me: never Greece,
 My country never shall I visit more.

MESSENGER, MENELAUS, HELENA, CHORUS.

- MESS. Long have I sought thee, Menelaus, with pain
 All this barbaric country wand'ring o'er,
 Sent by thy friends left in the secret cave.
 MEN. By these barbarians plunder'd? What hath chanc'd?
 MESS. Things marvellous, the facts surpassing words.
 MEN. Say what: something of new thy zeal imports.
 MESS. Thou hast sustain'd a thousand toils in vain.
 MEN. These are old woes: what hast thou to relate?
 MESS. Thy wife is gone into the rolling air,

Borne from the sight, and lost amidst the sky,
Leaving the solemn cave in whose recess
We guarded her; but e'er she vanish'd spoke
These words, "O ye unhappy sons of Troy,
" And all ye Grecians, on Scamander's banks
" For me you died, by Juno's fraud you died,
" Deeming that Paris triumph'd in the charms
" Of Helena, who ne'er was his. The time
" Assign'd me I have stay'd, and now, complete
" The fate-appointed work, to Æther go
" My father. But th' unhappy Helena,
" Who knows no guilt, feels all the cruel wounds
" Of infamy."——Ha! art thou here? O hail,
Daughter of Leda! To the stars I said
Thou hadst retir'd, not knowing that on wings
Thou hadst the pow'r to fly: no more from thee
This mock'ry I allow; enough of toils
Thy husband, and his valiant friends in arms
At Ilium, lady, for thy sake have borne.

MEN. It is so: truth is in her words; with these
They hold agreement. Oh the wish'd-for day,
Which gives me thus to clasp thee in my arms!

HEL. O thou most dear of men! The time indeed
Was tedious, but the joy is come at last.
Mine is the pleasure, O my friends, my lord
To have receiv'd, and in the rolling course
Of yon bright sun to hang on his dear hand.

MEN. And I on thine. I have a thousand things
To say, but know not which to mention first.

HEL. I am all joy: the tresses on my head
Are rais'd like wings; my eyes o'erflow with tears.
What pleasure round thee thus to throw my arms,
O my lov'd lord! thy sight transports my soul.

MEN. Fate now is kind: once more I hold my wife,
Daughter of Jove and Leda; bless'd, once bless'd,
When her two brothers, on their snow-white steeds
Conspicuous, at her nuptials wav'd the torch;
But the gods bore her from my house away.

- HEL. But lead us to an happier fortune now:
The ill is now a blessing, and hath brought
My husband to me: tedious the delay,
But may this blessing be confirm'd to me!
- MEN. Be it confirm'd; thy wish is mine: if one
Is wretched, wretched must the other be.
- HEL. My friends, my friends, for sorrows past no more
I weep, I mourn no more: I have my lord,
I have my lord, whom many a rolling year
Sad I expected to return from Troy.
- MEN. And I have thee. How many thousand suns
Have roll'd, e'er what the goddess wrought I knew!
- HEL. My tears from joy, more than from sorrow, flow.
What should I say? What mortal this could hope?
Beyond my thought I clasp thee to my breast.
- MEN. And I clasp thee to mine. I thought indeed
That to th' Idæan city thou hadst fled,
Th' unhappy tow'rs of Troy. But, by the gods,
How from my house wast thou convey'd away?
- HEL. Ah me! my woes thou to their bitter source
Wou'dst trace, a tale of sorrow thou wou'dst hear.
- MEN. Speak: what the gods have wrought attention claims.
- HEL. Howe'er I tell it, it will shock my soul.
- MEN. Yet speak: with pleasure sorrows past we hear.
- HEL. Ne'er to the bed of the barbaric youth
Came I with winged sails, with winged love;
His baleful nuptials never did I know.
- MEN. What god, what fate then, bore thee from thy country?
- HEL. The son of Jove, O my lov'd lord, the son
Of Jove convey'd me to the banks of Nile.
- MEN. This of thy guide excites astonishment;
Thy words are marvellous.
- HEL. I weep, mine eyes
Are wet with tears. The wife of Jove design'd
My ruin.
- MEN. Why to ills devoting thee?
- HEL. Ah me, the baths, the fountains, where their charms
The goddesses with added grace adorn'd!

Thence came the judgment, source of all my ills.

MEN. Did Juno for this judgment work thee woe?

HEL. That me from Paris she might bear away,
A prize by Venus promis'd to his arms.

MEN. How wretched!

HEL. Yes, that wretchedness was mine:
So I was borne to Egypt.

MEN. And she gave
For thee a phantom in thy figure form'd!

HEL. But in my house, what woes, what woes! Ah me,
My mother!

MEN. What of her hast thou to speak?

HEL. My mother is no more: by her own hands
In anguish for my foul disgrace she died.

MEN. I weep for her: but doth thy daughter live,
The young Hermione?

HEL. She lives, lov'd lord,
But lives unwedded, lonely; and with sighs
The shame of my unhallow'd nuptials mourns.

MEN. O Paris, thou hast ruin'd all my house!
But on thyself the ruin hast thou drawn,
And on ten thousand Grecians clad in arms.

HEL. Me too, ill-fated and accurs'd, the god
Forc'd from my country, from my state, from thee,
Because I left my house, my nuptial bed,
Which yet I left not, led by shameful love.

CHOR. If blessings on your future life await,
Your past afflictions may be well repaid.

MESS. Let me too, Menelaus, your joys partake:
I hear them, but a clearer knowledge want.

MEN. Thou too, old man, in our discourse shalt share.

MESS. Our toils at Ilium did not she dispense?

MEN. Not she; the gods deceiv'd us: in our hands
We held a cloud-form'd image fraught with ills.

MESS. What, for a phantom have we borne vain toils?

MEN. These are the works of Juno, and the strife
Of the three rival beauties of the skies.

MESS. Is this a real woman, and thy wife?

MEN. She is: these things believe thou on my word.

MESS. The gods, my child, to different men assign
Fortunes as different; in their counsels dark,
Nor trac'd by human wisdom, they with ease
Effect their various purposes: one toils,
Another knows not toil, but all at once
Ruin o'erwhelms him. You have had full share,
Thou and thy husband, of afflictions, thou
From evil fame, he in the works of war.
But, whilst he toil'd, he by his toils attain'd
Nought of advantage, he attains it now,
And its choice blessings fate spontaneous pours.
Thy aged father and thy brothers sprung
From Jove thou hast not sham'd, nor hast done aught
Of what was bruited. Pleas'd I now renew
Thy nuptials, ready memory now recalls
The torches which I bore when thy four steeds
I drove, and in the car with him thou sat'st
A bride, exchanging thy illustrious house.
Vile is the wretch, who doth not hold his lords
In reverence, nor rejoices in their joy,
Nor in their sorrows grieves. It is my wish,
Though born a slave, among the generous slaves
To be accounted, bearing a free mind,
If not the name: for better this I deem,
Than two bad things, to harbour a base mind,
And hear from those around the name of slave.

MEN. 'Tis well, old man: oft standing at my shield
Hast thou amidst my toils sustain'd thy share
Of toils; my happier fortune sharing now
Go to the cave, and to my friends there left
Relate what here hath happen'd: on the shore
Charge them to stay, the conflicts, which I deem
Must here be mine, awaiting, and to mark
How from this country we may speed our sails;
That sharing all one fortune, we may find
Some means from these barbarians to be sav'd.

MESS. This shall be done, O king. But I have seen

How vain, how full of falsehoods is the skill
 Of the divining seers; nor is there aught
 Of firm assurance in the blazing fires,
 Or in the voice of birds: how weak to deem
 That to man's welfare birds can aught avail?
 For to the Grecian host nor voice nor sign
 Did Calchas give that for a cloud he saw
 His dear friends die; but Ilium was destroy'd
 In vain. The god, thou haply may'st reply,
 So will'd not: why to auguries then fly?
 By sacrifice we ought to ask the gods
 For blessings, and omit prophetic signs,
 Inventions to delude man's life in vain.
 Never was man made rich on hallow'd flames
 By idly gazing: the best augury
 Is prudence, which to well-weigh'd counsels guides.

CHOR. Of auguries with thine, old man, my thoughts
 Accord: for he, who hath the gods his friends,
 Hath in his house the truest oracle.

HEL. It may be so: here thus far all is well.
 Much-suffering man, how wast thou sav'd from Troy?
 To know avails not; yet a friend must feel
 A wish to hear the ills a friend hath borne.

MEN. Much hast thou ask'd in brief: but of my toils
 Why should I tell thee in th' Ægean sea;
 Of flames that gleam'd above th' Eubœan wave
 By Nauplius kindled; of the Cretan towns
 And Lybian, which I pass'd; why of the rocks
 Of Perseus? for I would not weary thee
 With the recital. It would pain my soul

825. When the Grecians were returning from Troy, Nauplius, in revenge for the death of his son Palamedes, kindled fires on the heights of Eubœa: the fleet, deceived by these, ran upon the rocks of Caphareus, a mountain of Eubœa, and suffered greatly: thus Virgil,

Euboicæ cautes, ultorque Caphareus. Æn. xi. 260.

the vengeful Capharæan coast,

Th' Eubœan rocks— *Dryden.*

827. The western coast of Africa, where Perseus slew Medusa. *Diodorus.*

To speak my ills ; I had enough of toil
In suffering them, my griefs I twice should bear.

HEL. Discreeter are thy words, than mine which made
Th' enquiry : yet, omitting all the rest,
Tell me one thing, how long hast thou been tost
On the rough sea contending with the waves ?

MEN. Besides ten toilsome years at Ilium pass'd,
Sev'n times the sun hath roll'd his annual course.

HEL. Oh thou hast nam'd a tedious time ; and sav'd
From thence thou hither to be slain art come.

MEN. What say'st thou ? To be slain ? This ruin whence ?

HEL. Fly, quickly fly, and quit this barbarous land,
Or thou wilt die by him that rules this house.

MEN. What have I done deserving such an ill ?

HEL. Hind'ring my nuptials, 'gainst his will thou comest.

MEN. Is there one here who wills to wed my wife ?

HEL. And with rude insults : such have I sustain'd.

MEN. Some potent lord, or he who here is king ?

HEL. The son of Proteus, monarch of these realms.

MEN. This then is what the servant darkly spoke.

HEL. At what barbaric portal hast thou stood ?

MEN. At this, whence as a beggar I was driv'n.

HEL. Didst thou then beg for food ? Unhappy me !

MEN. That was in fact my purpose, though not nam'd.

HEL. All that concerns my nuptials then thou know'st.

MEN. Save this, if thou hast shunn'd these bridal rites.

HEL. Pure, be assur'd, have I preserv'd thy bed.

MEN. What proof ? Most grateful are thy words, if true.

HEL. Seest thou my wretched seat beside that tomb ?

MEN. A couch of leaves : what there hast thou to do ?

HEL. A suppliant there these nuptials to avoid.

MEN. Are altars rare, or these your barbarous rites ?

HEL. This, like the temples of the gods, protects.

MEN. May I not then conduct thee to my house ?

HEL. The sword awaits thee, rather than my bed.

MEN. So should I be of mortals most a wretch.

HEL. Let not shame stay thee now : fly from this land.

MEN. And leave thee ! Troy for thee I laid in dust.

- HEL. Better than for my bed by him to die.
 MEN. Unmanly this, and much unworthy Troy.
 HEL. The tyrant, if thou wou'dst, thou canst not kill.
 MEN. What, will the sword on him imprint no wound?
 HEL. Wisdom attempts not things impossible.
 MEN. Shall I then tamely yield my hands to chains?
 HEL. Caution is here requir'd, and much of art.
 MEN. 'Tis nobler in some great attempt to die.
 HEL. There is one hope, by which we may be sav'd.
 MEN. By gifts, by daring, or persuasive speech?
 HEL. If the king knows not thou art here arriv'd.
 MEN. Who shall inform him? Me he will not know.
 HEL. Within one aids him equal to the gods.
 MEN. Some voice perchance there holds its secret seat.
 HEL. No: but his sister, nam'd Theonoe.
 MEN. Oracular the name; but what her pow'r?
 HEL. She all things knows, and will inform her brother.
 MEN. Then I must die: I cannot be conceal'd.
 HEL. Her gentle nature suppliant might we win——
 MEN. Win to do what? What hope dost thou present?
 HEL. Not to disclose that thou art here arriv'd.
 MEN. If we prevail, safe may we leave this land?
 HEL. If she our counsels shares; but not by stealth.
 MEN. Be this thy task: on woman woman wins.
 HEL. Her knees these hands shall not forbear to clasp.
 MEN. What if to our entreaties she be deaf?
 HEL. Then thou must die, and I by force must wed.
 MEN. Thou wou'dst betray me: force is thy pretence.
 HEL. No: by thy head, a sacred oath, I swear——
 MEN. Swear what? To die, and never stain my bed?
 HEL. By the same sword; and near thee will I lie.
 MEN. Take my right hand, on that confirm thy oath.
 HEL. I take it; if thou diest, to leave this light.

880. A divine voice, that declares future events without an interpreter, or prophet. The Romans had their *Aius Locutius*.

Vox quoque per lucos vulgo exaudita silentes

Ingens. Virg. Georg. i. 476. So Livy, book v.

MEN. And I, depriv'd of thee, will leave my life

HEL. How, if we die, with glory shall we die?

MEN. I on this tomb will kill thee, and then kill
Myself: but for thy bed I first will strive
In a bold conflict: but whoe'er hath will,
Let him come near; my glory won at Troy
I will not sully; nor, to Greece return'd,
Receive this keen reproach, that I depriv'd
Thetis of her Achilles, that I saw
The Telamonian Ajax, and the son
Of Theseus die, yet dar'd not leave the light
For my own wife. No: for the gods are wise,
And on the brave man, fall'n beneath his foes,
Light in his tomb will lay the earth; but heap
Its gross and cumbrous burden on the base.

CHOR. Oh may the race of Tantalus, ye gods,
At length be bless'd, nor know affliction more!

HEL. Unhappy me! for such my fortune now;
Ruin comes rolling on us: from the house
Theonoe, the fate-foretelling virgin,
Comes forth; the house resounds as from the doors
The bolts move backwards. Fly: but wherefore fly?
Absent or present she thy coming knows.
Ah me, unhappy, how am I undone!
From Troy and that barbaric country sav'd,
Here shalt thou fall by the barbaric sword.

THEONOE, HELENA, MENELAUS, CHORUS.

THEO. Go thou before me, bearing in thine hand
The lighted torch; and, as the solemn rite
Demands, with incense scent the ambient air,
That pure I may receive the breath of heav'n.
But if the way by tread of impious foot
Hath been polluted, purge it with the flame,
And strike it with the torch, that I may pass.
My rites perform'd in honour of the gods,
Bear to my Lares back their sacred flame.—
Well, Helena; had my responses aught

Of truth? Thy husband, Menelaus, is come,
And stands before us, of his ships depriv'd,
And of thy image. What a world of toils,
Unhappy man, escap'd art thou arriv'd!
Nor dost thou know if home thou shalt return,
Or here remain. A council of the gods
Will this day 'round the throne of Jove be held,
With no small strife, on thee: for Juno, once
Thy foe, propitious now, thy safe return
To Sparta wills, with her; that Greece may know
How Paris in unreal nuptials joy'd,
The gift of Venus: thy return her will
Opposes, lest detected she appear
By fraud the prize of beauty to have gain'd,
With Helena's ill-promis'd nuptials bought.
On me th' event depends, should I inform,
As Venus wills, my brother that thou here
Art present, and destroy, or, taking part
With Juno, save thy life, thy presence here
Hid from my brother, who hath giv'n me charge
To tell him, shou'dst thou chance to reach this land.
How must it be? Shall I my brother shew
That thou art here, my safety to procure?
O virgin, suppliant at thy knees I fall,
A seat that suits th' unhappy, for myself,
For him, whom absent long, and scarce receiv'd,
Dying I soon must see. Ah, do not tell
Thy brother that my husband is return'd
To these fond arms: but, I entreat thee, save,
Oh save him! For thy brother do not sell
Thy piety, betray'd to purchase thanks
Unhallow'd and unjust. The gods abhor
All acts of violence, commanding men
T' enjoy what honour hath acquir'd, but nought
By rapines wrested: wealth must be disdain'd,
If by injustice grasp'd. The air of heav'n
Is to all mortals free, the earth is free,
In which our houses we may fill with wealth,

HEL.

Not take from others, plund'ring them by force.
Me by divine command, but to my peace
Destructive, Hermes to thy father gave,
To save me for my husband: he is here,
He wishes to receive me: how, if dead,
Can he receive me? Can thy sire restore
The living to the dead? Do thou revere
Thy father and the pow'rs of heav'n: perpend
This question, Would the god, and he who lies
Beneath this hallow'd tomb, wish to retain
Another's right, or wish to give it back?
To give it back, I think. Behoves thee then
Not to regard thy brother's foolish wish
More than thy father's honour. In the fates
If thou art skill'd, and hast o'er things divine
High charge, thy father's justice shou'dst thou wrong,
And to thy unjust brother grant this grace,
It were foul shame indeed that thou shou'dst know
All things divine, what is, and what is not,
And not know justice. But with pity view
My wretched state, and save me from these ills.
Through the wide world is Helena abhorr'd,
Bruited through Greece as to her nuptial bed
Disloyal, for the pomp of splendid Troy
Exchang'd: but should I e'er return to Greece,
Should I revisit Sparta, they would hear,
Would see that by th' illusion of the gods
They perish'd, and that I was never false,
My friends betraying: thus should I regain
My fame of modesty; my daughter thus
In nuptials give, whom no man now will wed.
Here shall my cruel wand'rings end, and I
Once more enjoy the riches of my house.
If he had died, and on the funeral pile
Been laid, though distant far, my tears had shewn
How much I lov'd him: shall I lose him now,
Safe as he is and living, from me torn?
No virgin: this thy suppliant I entreat,

Grant me this grace, and emulate the deeds
Of thy just father. On a child this beams
The brightest glory, when he draws his birth
From an illustrious father, that he holds
The great example always in his view.

THEO. Thy words move pity; pity to thyself
Is due: but I from Menelaus would hear
With what address he for his life will plead.

MEN. I at thy knees shall neither deign to fall,
Nor dew mine eyes with tears: my fame at Troy,
If now with fear appall'd, I should disgrace.
They say indeed it shews a generous mind,
When great misfortunes press, to pour the tear:
This gen'rous, if aught gen'rous it may be,
Shall not be mine: my firmness I will hold.
If it seems good to thee to save a man,
A stranger, who with justice on his side
Seeks to regain his wife, give me my wife,
Nay further, save me: if it seems not good,
I shall not now first learn what misery is,
And a base woman thou wilt shew thyself.
But what is worthy of me, what I deem
Just, and what most perchance may touch thy heart,
That to thy father's tomb I will address:
Rever'd old man, who in this marble tomb
Hast now thy mansion, hear me, give me back
My wife, whom to thy justice Jove consign'd,
To guard her for me. Thou, I know, wilt ne'er
Restore her, thou art dead: yet will not She
Brook that her father, from the dead invoc'd,
Her father once in glory high renown'd,
Suffer dishonour: hers is now the pow'r.
Thee too, dread monarch of th' infernal realms,
I to my aid invoke; for many dead,
Who for her sake fell by this sword in war,
Thou hast receiv'd: thou hast thy prey: and now
Or give them back to heav'n's ethereal light,
Or force her, with a virtue that outshines

Her pious sire's, to give me back my wife.
 But if you rend her from me, what her words
 Declar'd not, I will speak; O Virgin, know
 That we are bound by oath thy brother first
 T' oppose with arms: he then must fall, or I:
 These are plain words: but if he dares not stand
 The bloody contest, to destroy us bent
 By famine suppliants at this tomb, my hand
 Shall kill her; that is fix'd; through my own breast
 Then drive the trenchant sword, e'en on this tomb,
 That through the sepulchre our blood may flow;
 Thus on this marble monument in death
 Together will we lie, eternal grief
 To thee, and to thy father foul disgrace.
 For never shall thy brother wed my wife,
 Another never: I will bear her with me,
 If not to Sparta, to the realms below.
 But wherefore this? If I to tears should melt
 With female softness, piteous I should seem
 Rather than dauntless. Kill me, if thy will
 Be such; inglorious, be thou well assur'd,
 Thou shalt not kill me. Rather let my words
 Move thee: be just; let me receive my wife.

CHOR. Thou, Virgin, art the umpire in this cause;
 Let thy decision then give joy to all.

THEO. To piety my nature and my will
 Incline: myself I reverence, nor will stain
 My father's glory; neither will I grant
 That to my brother, which will mark my name
 With infamy: for Justice in my heart
 Hath rais'd her ample shrine; for Nereus this
 I hold, and Menelaus will strive to save.
 Since Juno wills to do thee grace, with her
 Shall be my suffrage: Venus may I find
 Propitious to me, though with her I ne'er
 Held commerce, and my virgin purity
 Wish to retain. What at this tomb thou said'st
 As to my father foul disgrace, the same

I say: not giving her, I were unjust.
Were he now living, he to thee would give
Thy wife, and thee to her. Revenge belongs
To those that to the realms below are sunk,
And to all men that breathe this vital air.
The soul of the deceas'd, though now no more
In life, amidst th' immortal ether holds
Its mansion, and immortal sense retains.
But, not to lengthen speech, at thy request
I will be silent, nor where folly rules
Be aiding to my brother; for his good
Thus shall I work, though otherwise he deem,
From impious deeds to Virtue's holy paths
Recalling him. But how t' escape, find you:
I shall retire, my lips in silence clos'd:
But first address the gods; with suppliant vows
To Venus her permission, that again
Thou to thy country may'st return, implore;
To Juno, that her purpose she retain,
Benevolent to thee and to thy wife.
And thou, my father, now among the dead,
Shalt never, far as I have pow'r, be called
Impious, for piety whilst living fam'd.

CHOR. Never did blessings on th' unrighteous wait;
But hopes of safety ne'er forsake the just.

HELENA, MENELAUS, CHORUS.

- HEL. We from the virgin, far as in her lies,
Have safety, Menelaus: behoves thee now
Sage counsel, our escape how best t' effect.
- MEN. Then hear me: in this house thou long hast dwelt,
And with the king's attendants much hast liv'd.
- HEL. Why say'st thou this? Thou giv'st me hope thy thought
Hath something for our common safety form'd.
- MEN. One, who commands the coursers of the king,
Cou'dst thou persuade t' entrust us with a car?
- HEL. Perchance I could: but how direct our flight,
The ways, and this barbaric land unknown?

Impossible.

- MEN. Then place me in the house,
Conceal'd : the king I with this sword will slay.
- HEL. The virgin would not suffer this, nor bear
Silent thy purpose 'gainst her brother's life.
- MEN. I have no bark, in which we may be sav'd
By flying; for the sea hath swallow'd mine.
- HEL. Hear, if aught wise a woman may propose.
Wilt thou my words may speak of thee as dead?
- MEN. That were an omen boding ill : yet thence
May aught be gain'd, report of me as dead.
- HEL. By female wailings, and my tresses shorn,
I may to pity move this impious man.
- MEN. What hope of safety can this give? Indeed
It bears the semblance of some ancient rite.
- HEL. An empty tomb to give thee, in the sea
As sunk, the tyrant's leave will I implore.
- MEN. And, should he grant it, how without a bark,
Raising this empty tomb, shall we be sav'd?
- HEL. A bark too will I ask, and what may grace
Thy tomb place in it, for th' embracing wave.
- MEN. Save one thing all is well : should he on land
Bid the tomb rise, thy plea will nought avail.
- HEL. But I will say, on land our Grecian rites
No tomb to those, who died at sea, allow.
- MEN. This speaks success : then with thee will I sail,
And with us bear the honours for my tomb.
- HEL. Thou must be present, and thy mariners,
Who, from the wreck escaping, reach'd the shore.
- MEN. And if I find an anchor'd bark, to man
Shall man oppos'd wave fierce the flaming sword.
- HEL. That to direct be thine : but may the gales
Breathe fav'ring, and the vessel safely sail!
- MEN. It will : the gods will give my toils to cease.
But of my death who wilt thou say inform'd thee?
- HEL. Thyself, alone preserv'd, and with the son
Of Atreus sailing say thou saw'st him die.
- MEN. These tatter'd vestments round my body wrapt

Will testify my wretched vessel's wreck.

HEL. They suit this purpose; and thy loss, then deem'd
Unhappy, may our better fortune work.

MEN. Should I attend thee to this royal house,
Or take my station silent at this tomb?

HEL. Stay here: for aught of outrage should his pride
Attempt, this tomb will guard thee, and thy sword.
I will go in, cut off these crisped locks,
For sable change these white robes, rend these cheeks,
And make them stream with blood; for great the prize
In contest, and of doubtful poise: to die,
If in my arts detected, or once more
To visit Sparta, and to save thy life.
O Juno, partner of the bed of Jove,
Goddess rever'd, two wretches from their woes
Relieve, we suppliant beg thee, stretching thus
Our hands to yon star-spangled sky, thy seat.
And thou, who by my nuptials didst obtain
The prize of beauty, Venus, crush me not:
O daughter of Dione, I from thee
Enough of sorrow have sustain'd, my name,
Not person, 'mongst barbarians giv'n by thee
To shameful note: permit me, if thy will
To death devotes me, in my native land
To die. But why with mischiefs is thy soul
Unsated, loves, deceits, and wily trains
Still working, and the philtred bowls with blood
Banefully mix'd? Were moderation thine,
Of all the gods most pleasing wou'dst thou be
To men: I speak not this without just cause.

CHORUS.

STRO. 1. On thee, high-nested in the museful shade
By close-inwoven branches made,
Thee, sweetest bird, most musical
Of all that warble their melodious song

The charmed woods among,
 Thee, tearful Nightingale, I call:
 O come, and from thy dark-plumed throat
 Swell sadly sweet thy melancholy note,
 Attemper'd to my voice of woe,
 For Helen let thy sorrows flow,
 For all the griefs her breast that pain'd,
 For all the toils that Troy sustain'd,
 Where Mis'ry pours the streaming tear,
 And shudders at the Grecian spear.
 Proudly the billows bounding o'er
 He came, he came, he reach'd the shore;
 Back his barbaric oars he plies,
 From Sparta's strand to Phrygia flies,
 Destin'd to Priam's realms to bear
 A dark'ning storm, the storm of war,
 By Venus hapless Paris led
 To seek, as thine, a fatal bed.

ANTIS.1. By rocky masses hurtling in the air,
 Beneath the sword, beneath the spear
 Fell many Grecians in the fight:
 With tresses shorn their wives bewail the dead,
 Bewail their widow'd bed.
 Many the fatal-blazing light,
 Which lonely sailing Nauplius gave,
 And rais'd it gleaming o'er th' Eubœan wave,
 Led on the rocks that lie below,
 Where tall Caphareus lifts his brow;
 Many on Ægæ's sea-beat shore
 The treach'rous flame to ruin bore;
 Where its rude sides the mountain bends,
 No friendly port its arms extends.
 When from their country on the main
 Launch'd in proud pomp the Phrygian train,
 And wanton in their swelling sails
 Breath'd to their wish the flatt'ring gales,
 From Greece their prize, no prize, they bore
 But her Revenge athirst for gore;

A breathing phantom for the fair,
 By Juno form'd of imag'd air.
 STRO. 2. Was this then human, or divine?
 Did it a middle nature share?
 What mortal shall declare?
 Who shall the secret bounds define?
 When the gods work, we see their pow'r;
 We see on their high bidding wait
 The prosp'rous gales, the storms of fate:
 But who their awful councils shall explore?
 Thou, Helen, art from Jove:
 O'er Leda's breast spread heav'n's high king,
 In form a swan, his silver wing:
 The fruit thou of his love.
 Yet Fame through Greece hath publish'd wide
 Thee to thy loose desires a prey;
 That truth, faith, justice, heav'n defied,
 Thy beauty shines but to betray.

Nothing 'mongst mortals certainty affords,
 But the gods speak, and truth is in their words.
 ANTIS. 2. Think you, fond men, whose martial pride
 Glows 'midst the bleeding ranks of war,
 By the courageous spear
 The strife of mortals to decide?
 Vain are your thoughts: should rage abhorr'd,
 That glories in the purple flood,
 The contest only end with blood,
 Unsheath'd through angry states would flame the sword.
 Outrageous to destroy
 The spear hath desolation spread,
 With slaughter stain'd the widow'd bed,
 And desolated Troy.
 Yet well might Reason's suasive charms
 Have made each warring foe a friend:
 But many in the shock of arms
 To Pluto's dreary realms descend;
 Fires, like the flames of Jove, the walls surround,
 And Ilium's ramparts smoke upon the ground.

THEOCLYMENUS, CHORUS.

THEOC. All hail, my father's tomb ! Beside my gate
 Thee, Proteus, I interr'd, that going out,
 And ent'ring, Theoclymenus thy son
 Might always greet thee with a fond address.
 You, my attendants, of my hounds take care,
 And in the royal house dispose the nets.
 Much I reproach myself that I with death
 Th' unfaithful have not punish'd ; for I hear
 That on this coast some Grecian is arriv'd,
 Unnotic'd by my guards : a spy he comes,
 Or to bear Helena by stealth away :
 But let me only take him, he shall die.—
 Ha ! all his purpose, as it seems, I find
 Accomplish'd ; for the Spartan at the tomb
 Hath left her seat, and from this land is sail'd.
 Unbar the gates, ho ! my attendant train,
 Harness my steeds, instant bring forth my cars ;
 Not for a little toil shall she escape,
 Borne hence, whom ardently I wish my bride.—
 Forbear : the object of my fond pursuit
 Present I see, not fled as I suppos'd.

THEOCLYMENUS, HELENA, CHORUS,
 MENELAUS *at the tomb.*

THEOC. Why hast thou chang'd thy white robes for these black
 And mourning weeds ? Why from thy noble head
 Thy tresses hast thou shorn ? What mean these tears
 Fresh-streaming down thy cheeks ? Arise, thy griefs
 From some ill-omen'd visions of the night,
 Or from thy country have bad tidings reach'd
 Thine ear, that sorrows thus afflict thy soul ?

HEL. My lord, for by that title now I greet thee,
 I am undone, lost, sunk, to nothing sunk.

THEOC. Wherein lies thy affliction ? What hath chanc'd ?

HEL. How shall I speak it ? Menelaus is dead.

THEOC. In this my fortune hath not less of joy.

How know'st thou ? Did Theonoe tell thee this ?

HEL. She did, and one who present saw him die.

THEOC. Hath one arriv'd t' inform thee of a truth?

HEL. One comes: Oh, had he, as I wish'd him, come!

THEOC. Who comes? Where is he? Clearly would I know.

HEL. He who sits trembling at this sacred tomb.

THEOC. Apollo, how unsightly is his garb!

HEL. Ah me! methinks I see my husband thus.

THEOC. Whence is this man? How came he to this land?

HEL. A Grecian, one who with my husband sail'd.

THEOC. What death, by his report, died Menelaus.

HEL. The death most rueful, in the briny waves.

THEOC. Where? As he sail'd on the barbaric seas?

HEL. Forc'd by the winds on Lybia's portless rocks.

THEOC. How then escap'd this man, who with him sail'd?

HEL. Oft are the mean more lucky than the great.

THEOC. Where the wreck'd vessel, landing, did he leave?

HEL. Where oh that he, not Menelaus, had sunk!

THEOC. The vessel lost, how reach'd this man the land?

HEL. Chance brought, he says, some sailors to his aid.

THEOC. Where is the mischief sent, for thee, to Troy?

HEL. The imag'd cloud? It vanish'd into air.

THEOC. O Troy, O Priam, ruin'd without cause!

HEL. In Troy's misfortunes I have had large share.

THEOC. Unburied is thy husband, or entomb'd?

HEL. Unburied. My afflictions sink my soul.

THEOC. Are thy bright tresses for this sorrow shorn?

HEL. Oh, he was dear, whilst here, most dear to me!

THEOC. Is this then a mischance well wail'd with tears?

HEL. Light would thy grief be, should thy sister die?

THEOC. No. At this tomb wilt thou now hold thy seat?

HEL. Why taunt me thus, and not forbear the dead?

THEOC. Me, to thy husband faithful, dost thou fly.

HEL. But fly no more: my nuptials now prepare.

THEOC. Though late it comes, thy yielding I approve.

HEL. Know'st thou what should be done? Forget the past.

THEOC. For what return? Be grace with grace repaid.

HEL. A compact form'd, be reconcil'd to me.

THEOC. My anger flies; I give it to the air.

HEL. Low at thy knees, since now thou art my friend——

THEOC. What grace, thus stretch'd a suppliant, wou'dst thou ask?

HEL. To honour my dead husband with a tomb.

THEOC. What tomb to him? Wou'dst thou entomb his shade?

HEL. Greece hath a rite, whoe'er at sea is lost——

THEOC. What rite? In these things Greece is deeply skill'd.

HEL. To give him with rich vests an empty tomb.

THEOC. Perform these rites; choose for his tomb the ground.

HEL. Not thus we bury the lost mariner.

THEOC. How then? I am a stranger to your rites.

HEL. To sea whate'er becomes the dead we bear.

THEOC. With what shall I supply thee for the dead?

HEL. I know not: new the sad occasion to me.

THEOCLYMENUS, *seeing* MENELAUS.

O stranger, grateful tidings hast thou brought.

MEN. To me not grateful, king, nor to the dead.

THEOC. Those how inter you who at sea are lost?

MEN. With honours such as each hath means to give.

THEOC. Of wealth whate'er thou wilt, for her sake, speak.

MEN. First to the shades below the victim bleeds.

THEOC. What victims? Name them: those I shall present.

MEN. Judge thou: whate'er thou grantest will suffice.

THEOC. A steed or bull barbaric rites require.

MEN. Whate'er thou givest, generous let it be.

THEOC. Of such my fertile pastures have rich store.

MEN. And empty couches for the body spread.

THEOC. Those shall be giv'n: what do your rites ask more?

MEN. Arms of bright brass: for he was fond of arms.

THEOC. Worthy the race of Pelops will I give.

MEN. And what of beauteous bloom the earth now bears.

THEOC. These in what manner give you to the waves?

MEN. A bark and rowers are for this requir'd.

THEOC. How far from shore must the bark hold its course?

MEN. Far as the eye discerns its foamy track.

THEOC. This solemn custom why doth Greece observe?

MEN. That of th' oblations none be driv'n to land.

THEOC. A swift Phœnician bark shall be prepar'd.

MEN. That would be well, and grateful to the dead.

THEOC. This, without her, canst not thou well perform?

MEN. It is a child's, or wife's, or mother's task.

THEOC. She to her husband then this rite must pay.

MEN. This piety requires, and not to rob
Of their just rites the dead.

THEOC. Then let her go:

Yes, to support a pious wife is mine.

The house I now will enter, and bring forth

The honours for the dead; nor from this land

Send thee with empty hands: for her dear sake

This will I do. The tidings thou hast brought

Are pleasing to me: raiment in return,

Throwing this mean garb off, shalt thou receive,

And food, for wretched is thy present state:

So to thy country blest shalt thou return.

And thou, unhappy, grieve not thou thy soul

At ills past cure; for Menelaus is dead,

And never can thy husband live again.

MEN. This, lady, now is thine: behoves thee love

Thy present husband, him, that is no more,

Forgetting: best thy fortune this beseems.

If e'er in safety I return to Greece,

The former foul reproach, which stain'd thy fame,

I will wipe off, be thou but such a wife

As to thy husband it is meet thou be.

HEL. Such shall I be: my lord shall ne'er have cause

To blame me; thou, here present, shalt of this

Thyself be witness: but, poor wretch, go in,

Refresh thee in the bath, and change thy garb:

My kindness shall not linger: with more zeal

To my lov'd Menelaus wilt thou perform

These rites, from us receiving what is meet.

CHORUS.

STRO. 1. In times of old with eager haste

1411. This Ode is very difficult: Mr. Heath suspects it as belonging to some other tragedy, and improperly inserted here. Dr. Minsgrave defends it upon the only principle on which it can be defended, its religion, though he mistakes the

The mountain mother of the gods
 Through thick-entangled forests past,
 Along the banks of streaming floods,
 And where the beating billows roar
 Against the hoarse-resounding shore :
 The virgin of unutterable name
 She fondly sought ; and deep'ning round
 The Bacchic cymbals loud resound
 (As in her lion-harness'd car she came)
 The virgin, to rude force a prey,
 Borne from her circling nymphs away,
 Attendant on the mighty mother go
 Swift as the winds the virgins of the skies,
 Diana with her silver bow,
 And Pallas prompt her spear to wield,
 The Gorgon frowning on her shield.
 From heav'n's high throne Jove roll'd his awful eyes,
 And, fix'd the purpose of his mind,
 A different fate assign'd.

ANTIS. 1. When now, her weary wand'rings o'er,
 The anxious mother ceas'd her toil :
 For vain each secret pass t' explore,
 Her daughter fraud had made its spoil :
 She pass'd o'er Ida's craggy brow,
 Cold nurse of everlasting snow,
 Haunt of the nymphs ; and, to her grief a prey,
 Her limbs upon the damp weeds threw
 Which 'midst the rocky rudeness grew ;
 Forbade the corn the ploughman's toil t' obey,
 Its verdure to the earth denied ;
 Famine ensued, and mortals died :

deity who is the subject of it. Probably it was intended as a compliment to the Athenians for the veneration in which they held the mysterious rites of Ceres ; the neglect of which is said in the second Antistrophe to have been the cause of Helena's misfortunes.

1417. It was not allowed to mention the name of Proserpine, lest it should renew the grief of Ceres : so Callimachus,

Μὴ μὲν ταῦτα λίσσμεν, ἃ δάκρυον ἤγαγε Διοῖ.

No more the spreading foliage waves around,
 The flocks no more the gadding tendrils graze,
 But perish on th' unfaithful ground:
 No more the victim at the shrine
 Is offer'd to the pow'rs divine;
 The hallow'd cakes no more on altars blaze;
 She gives the freshing founts no more
 Their crystal streams to pour.

- STRO. 2. To men below, to gods above,
 When she had caus'd the feast to cease,
 The mourning mother's wrath t' appease
 Benign thus spoke imperial Jove,
 " Ye honour'd Graces, go,
 " To Ceres go, whose anguish'd soul
 " Indignant mourns her daughter lost,
 " Go, with soft notes her cares control,
 " And mitigate her woe.
 " And you, Aonia's tuneful boast,
 " Ye Muses go, swell high the choral song,
 " The brazen cymbal take,
 " The deep-toned timbrel wake,
 " Till sorrow is no more the strain prolong."
 First 'midst the heav'nly pow'rs with lovely grace
 The pipe bright Venus taking in her hand,
 Flush'd with a roseate smile her glowing face,
 Pleas'd with the varying notes its stops command.
- ANTIS. 2. What neither faith nor laws approve,
 Unholy flames hast thou inspir'd:
 These, her fierce wrath against thee fir'd,
 The mighty mother's vengeance move.
 Nor to the pow'rs divine
 Hast thou, my child, due honours paid.
 Much would avail the spotted vest,
 With the fawn's skin wert thou array'd;
 Much, with the ivy-twine
 Green-wreathing round the thyrsus drest:
 Much, the light vestments waving in the air,
 Whilst round in many a ring

Their floating folds they fling;
 Much, streaming to the wind the Bacchic hair;
 Much, to the goddess giv'n the sleepless nights:
 To her the moon is dearer than the days.
 Thou hast neglected all her hallow'd rites,
 Proud of the charms thy beauteous form displays.

HELENA, CHORUS.

HEL. Within the house all hath gone well, my friends:
 The daughter too of Proteus, our designs
 Concealing, to the king's enquiries made
 Touching my husband present there, replied,
 To do me favour, that this vital air
 He breath'd no more, nor view'd the sun's bright beams.
 And well my husband the advantage seiz'd
 Presented to him; for he bears himself
 The arms devoted to the waves, the shield
 On his strong arm he holds, and grasps the spear
 In his right hand, as with me to perform
 These honours to the dead: well is he arm'd
 To deeds of valour, and his hand will raise
 A thousand trophies of barbarians slain, —
 When we ascend the oar-directed bark:
 His sailor's garb exchang'd, he is array'd
 In radiant vests, my gift; and in the bath
 Refresh'd, to the pure stream a stranger long. —
 But from the house he comes, who fondly deems
 He holds my nuptials ready in his hands.
 I must be silent now, on thy good will
 And secresy relying; that if hence
 We may be sav'd, you some time we may save.

HELENA, THEOCLYMENUS, MENELAUS,
CHORUS, ATTENDANTS.

THEOC. In order, as this stranger shall appoint,
 Proceed, my servants, bearing to the sea
 These honours to the dead. Thou, Helena,
 If not amiss thou deem what I shall speak,

Be thou advis'd : stay here : these things alike
Thou to thy husband, present, wilt perform;
Or if not present ; for I fear for thee,
Lest urg'd by thy impassion'd grief thou cast
Thyself into the ocean's swelling wave,
In wild distraction for thy husband lost ;
For bitterly his loss dost thou lament.

HEL. Of my illustrious husband, I perforce
My wedded converse, and my former bed
Must honour ; for the love I bear my lord,
I could die with him ; but to him what grace
To add my death to his ? Permit me then
Myself to go, and to the dead present
These sad sepulchral honours : and to thee
May the gods give e'en all my soul can wish,
And to this stranger, for his friendly aid.
But me thou in thine house shalt have a wife,
Such as thou shou'dst have, for thy goodness shewn
To Menelaus and me ; for these things touch
My heart. But give command that one provide
The bark, in which these presents we may bear,
That so thy grace complete I may receive.

THEOC. Go thou, provide them a Sidonian bark
Of fifty oars, with all its naval train.

HEL. Shall he command it, who adorns the tomb ?

THEOC. Him should my mariners in chief obey.

HEL. Again command, that clearly they may know.

THEOC. Again, a third time, if it pleases thee.

HEL. Blest may'st thou be, and I in my intents.

THEOC. But do not now too much dissolve in tears.

HEL. This day to thee my grateful soul shall shew.

THEOC. Care for the dead is nought but empty toil.

HEL. My cares in part are there, in part are here.

THEOC. Thou shalt not find me worse than Menelaus.

HEL. In nought I blame thee, be but fortune kind.

THEOC. Thou may'st command it, give me but thy love.

HEL. I am not now to learn to love my friends.

THEOC. Wilt thou that I assist to launch the bark ?

HEL. Be not a servant to thy servants, king.

THEOC. Well: from the Grecian rites then I abstain:

My house is unpolluted, for not here

Died Menelaus. Go one of you, give charge

That to my house my prefects bring whate'er

May do my nuptials honour: it is meet

That all my land with joyful songs resound

My hymeneal rites, and Helena's,

And grace them with their due solemnity.

Thou, stranger, to the winding ocean go,

These presents to her former husband give,

Then to my house haste back, and with thee bring

My bride, that thou may'st celebrate with me

My nuptials; to thy country then return,

Or stay, thy life with happiness here blest.

MENELAUS, HELENA, CHORUS.

MEN. O Jove, the father thou art call'd, a god

Supremely wise, incline thine eyes to us,

Relieve us from our toils, grant us thy aid

Now drawing our afflictions up the steep:

Do thou but touch us with thy hand, the height

Of fortune, where we wish, we soon shall reach:

Enough of toils already have we borne.

Hear me, ye gods; much of affliction, much

Of sorrow you have heard: beneath a load

Of ills not always should I sink, but now

At length stand firm: grant me but this one grace,

With blessings all my future life you crown.

CHORUS.

STRO. 1. Thou swift Phœnician bark, whose prow

Gives birth to billows on the foaming tide,

Joying the furrow'd waves to plough,

And 'midst the Dolphins' sportive train to glide,

Whilst o'er the bosom of the deep

Friendly the gales soft-breathing sweep,

And the calm daughter of the azure main

Thus speaks, " Secure, ye naval train,
 " To Ocean's winds your spreading sails display ;
 " Now firmly grasp, now ply your oars,
 " To realms, where Perseus reign'd, convey
 " Your charge, and land her safe on rich Mycenæ's shores."

ANTIS. 1. May'st thou the river's stream beside,
 The slow-revolving years in absence past,
 Or nigh the dome's brass-glitt'ring pride,
 The daughters of Leucippus reach at last ;
 Or sports amidst the nightly train
 To Hyacinthus hold again :
 Him, as the disk with erring force he threw,
 Lamented youth, Apollo slew ;
 The son of Jove with many a solemn rite
 The day to Sparta hallow'd nam'd.
 There may thy daughter bless thy sight,
 For whom no bridal torch with joyful light hath flam'd.

STRO. 2. O might we through the liquid sky
 Wing'd like the birds of Lydia fly ;
 Birds, which the change of seasons know,
 And, left the wint'ry storms and snow,
 Their leader's well-known call obey :
 O'er many a desert dry and cultur'd plain
 He guides the marshall'd train,
 And cheers with jocund notes their way.
 Ye birds, that through th' aerial height
 Your course with clouds light-sailing share,
 Your flight amidst the Pleiads hold,
 And where Orion nightly flames in gold ;
 Then on Eurotas' banks alight,
 And this glad message bear,
 " Your king from Troy shall reach once more,
 " With conquest crown'd, his native shore."

ANTIS. 2. Ye sons of Tyndarus, side by side,
 As in a car, your coursers guide,

1594. From them the Virgins, priestesses of Hilaira and Phœbe, who were daughters of Apollo and the wives of Castor and Pollux, were called Leucippides.

1603. The migration of the Cranes is here finely described.

Descending from th' ethereal sky,
 Where whirling shine the stars on high,
 Your bright abode; Oh come, and save
 Your sister sailing o'er the azure main;
 Its swelling tide restrain,
 Its angry-rolling foamy wave:
 The bark, that wafts her o'er the floods,
 Give the soft gales t' attend from Jove;
 And from the voice of sland'rous blame
 Defend the honour of her injur'd name;
 Injur'd e'er since in Ida's woods
 For beauty's prize the rivals strove:
 She ne'er in Priam's realms appear'd,
 Nor Ilium's tow'rs by Phœbus rear'd.

THEOCLYMENUS, MESSENGER, CHORUS.

MESS. Well have I found thee at thy house, O king,
 That of new ills thou soon may'st be inform'd.

THEOC. What are they?

MESS. Nuptials with some other bride
 Emprise, for Helen from this land is fled.

THEOC. Flying on wings, or walking on the ground?

MESS. Her Menelaus hath borne by sea away,
 Coming himself with tidings of his death.

THEOC. Strange and incredible thy words: what bark
 Hath stretch'd its sails to bear him from this land?

MESS. That which thou gav'st the stranger: know in brief,
 Having thy mariners he went on board.

THEOC. How can this be? I am on fire to know.
 That one should master such a numerous crew,
 With which I sent thee, this surpasses thought.

MESS. When Jove-born Helen left this royal house,
 And to the sea advanc'd, with artful guile
 Softly she set her dainty foot, and mourn'd
 Her husband near her present, and not dead.
 When to the station of thy ships we came,
 A prime Sidonian vessel we drew down
 Of fifty benches and of fifty oars:

Then task succeeded task; one rais'd the mast,
 One fix'd the oar and tried its stroke, the sails
 Were hoisted, and the helm with chains let down.
 Amidst these toils some Grecians we observ'd,
 Who plough'd with Menelaus the stormy seas,
 Advancing to the strand; their garb was that
 Of shipwreck'd sailors, manly was their port,
 But squalid their appearance: when the son
 Of Atreus saw them present, thus he spoke,
 Making false shew of pity, Wretched men,
 How came you hither, from what Grecian bark
 Wreck'd in the waves? Will you the mournful rites
 To the lost son of Atreus with me pay,
 Whom Helen honours with an empty tomb,
 His corse not present? They, in fraudulent guise
 Dropping the tear, ascend the bark, and bear
 To Menelaus th' oblations in the sea
 Devoted to be sunk. To us this seem'd
 Suspicious, and our thoughts we mention'd each
 To other, when we saw the numerous train
 Enter the ship; but we restrain'd our tongues
 Obedient to thy words: for when thou gav'st
 Thy mandate that the stranger should command
 The vessel, all these things didst thou confound.
 Thy presents in the bark with ease we plac'd,
 All but the bull; he started from the planks,
 And roar'd, and roll'd his glaring eyes around,
 Arching his back, and threat'ning with his horns,
 That none dar'd touch him: Helen's husband then
 Thus call'd aloud, "O you, who rent the tow'rs
 "Of Ilium to the ground, will you not seize,
 "As Grecians wont, this bull, and to the ship
 "His body on your youthful shoulders bear?
 "A victim to the dead beneath my sword

1687. The bull was usually led to the altar by the horns: if he went reluctantly, it was deemed an ill omen; in which case some young men seized him, and carried him on their shoulders: one single cord was bound around his neck, *μονάμπικον δίζην*; this was gilt, and adorned with flowers. *Barnes.*

“Soon shall he bleed:” encourag’d by his voice
 They seiz’d the bull, they rais’d him from the ground,
 And bore him up the planks, while Menelaus
 Stroking his neck, bound with one golden cord,
 Sooth’d him to go on board. When now the bark
 Had all its stores receiv’d, with delicate foot
 Helen the steps ascending took her seat
 On the mid deck, and Menelaus, his name
 Not yet acknowledg’d, near her: at the sides
 The others, on the right and on the left
 In equal numbers man ’gainst man arrang’d,
 Bearing beneath their vests their swords conceal’d.
 The rowers to their marshal’s cheering shout
 Their shout return’d. When now the open sea
 We gain’d, yet from the land not distant far,
 The pilot ask’d, O stranger, should we sail
 Yet onward, or is this enough? He said,
 This is enough for me; then grasp’d his sword
 In his right hand, and to the prow advanc’d;
 There standing near the bull, but of the dead
 No mention made, deep in his neck he plung’d
 The sword, and pray’d, “Great monarch of the main,
 “Neptune, who dwellest deep beneath the waves,
 “And you, chaste train of Nereids, from this land
 “To Nauplia’s harbour bear me safe, and bear
 “My wife uninjur’d!” Gushing to the sea
 The streams of blood gave to the stranger signs
 Of glad presage. Then each express’d his thought
 Of foul deceit; “to Naxia let us steer
 “Our backward course, give thou command, and thou
 “The rudder turn.” Then at the slaughter’d bull
 The son of Atreus standing cried aloud
 To his associates, “Why, ye flow’r of Greece,

1718. What Naxia is, or where, is unknown: most of the annotators suspect the text is corrupted: Carmeli proposes to read *παλιν πλυσιν μιν αζιον*: Mr. Heath, *παλιν πλωσιν*. *Ναυπταις κελισι σν*. Dr. Musgrave would substitute *ισιαν* for *Ναζιαν*. The translator dares not indulge a conjecture, but wishes to see the passage elucidated.

“ Why this delay? On these barbarians rush,
“ Kill them, dispatch them, hurl them from the ship
“ Into the waves.” To this oppos’d a voice
Thy sailors cheer’d, “ Will you not seize what chance
“ Presents of arms? one snatch a pole, and one
“ A broken plank; raise you your oars, and smite
“ These hostile strangers; crush their bleeding heads.”
All started up, these bearing in their hands
The naval instruments, and those their swords:
The vessel stream’d with blood; and from the stern
The voice of Helena to daring deeds
Inflamed them, “ Where your glory won at Troy?
“ Shew it to these barbarians.” In their haste
Some fell, and those that stood thou soon might’st see
Rolling in blood. But Menelaus, array’d
In arms, observing his associate band
Where most annoy’d, ran thither with his sword
In his right hand, that leaping from the ship
Our sailors plung’d into the sea, the oars
Deserted by the rowers. To the helm
The king then went, and bade them steer the bark
To Greece: the mast was rais’d, a fav’ring wind
Arose, and proudly from this land they sail.
Flying the carnage I, the anchor near,
Let myself down, and dropt into the sea:
There as I struggled, from a fishing boat
One threw his line, and brought me safe to land
To tell thee this. Nought to man’s welfare more
Avails, than disbelief by prudence rul’d.

CHOR. That Menelaus, here present, should escape
Thy knowledge, king, and ours, was ne’er my thought.

THEOC. I am betray’d and ruin’d, wretched me,
By woman’s arts: my nuptials, my fond hopes
Are lost. If by pursuit their flying bark
Might be o’ertaken, I would spare no toil,
But quickly seize the strangers. My revenge
Shall now fall heavy on my sister’s head;
She hath deceiv’d me; in my house she saw

This Menelaus, and told me not; her voice
Henceforth shall ne'er deceive another man.

CHOR. Ah, whither, to what slaughter dost thou haste?

THEOC. Where justice calls me: but stand you away.

CHOR. No: on thy robes, my lord, I still will hang,
For thou art hast'ning to prodigious ills.

THEOC. Slave as thou art, wilt thou control thy lords?

CHOR. Yet is my purpose friendly.

THEOC. Not to me.

But let me go——

CHOR. We will not let thee go.

THEOC. To slay my wicked sister.

CHOR. Say not so.

She is most holy.

THEOC. Hath she not betray'd me?

CHOR. With honour, doing thus a righteous deed.

THEOC. And to another giv'n my bride?

CHOR. To one,

That hath a juster right.

THEOC. Who hath a right

O'er what is mine?

CHOR. He, from her father's hand

Who as his bride receiv'd her.

THEOC. But to me

Did fortune give her.

CHOR. And resistless fate

Took her away.

THEOC. In my affairs to judge

Becomes not thee.

CHOR. If honour prompts my words.

THEOC. I am a slave then here, it seems, not lord.

CHOR. What she hath done is holy: so I judge.

THEOC. Thou seem'st to have an ardent wish to die.

CHOR. Kill me: thy sister never shalt thou kill

With our consent. Kill me: to gen'rous slaves

It is a glory for their lords to die.

CASTOR and POLLUX.

Restrain thy anger, Theoclymenus,

King of this land: it drives thee headlong on
Beyond the bounds of right. The sons of Jove,
Whom Leda bore, with Helen from thy house
Now fled, speak to thee. Rage inflames thy heart
For nuptials not allow'd thee by the Fates.
The daughter of the Nereid, nymph divine,
Theonoe, thy sister, doth to thee
No wrong, the sacred councils of the gods
Revering, and her father's just commands:
For in thy house right was it she should dwell
E'en to the present time: but since the tow'rs
Of Troy are sunk in dust, and to the gods
Enough her name is lent, she ought not now
In these new nuptials to be held, but go
To her own house, and with her husband live.
Keep thy sword sheath'd, nor touch thy sister's life,
And think that prudence was in this her guide.
We would have sav'd our sister long e'er this,
Since Jove hath made us gods, but we perforce
Submitted to the stronger pow'r of fate,
And to those gods whose will decreed that thus
These things should be. These words I speak to thee.
Now to my sister I address my speech.
Sail with thy husband; you shall have a wind
Fav'ring your voyage: riding nigh the sea
We, thy twin-brothers, will be guards to thee,
And guide thee to thy country. When thy course
Shall end, and thou shalt quit this mortal life,
Thou shalt be call'd a goddess, with the sons
Of Jove receive libations, and with us
The honours share. Such is the will of Jove.
But where the son of Maia lodg'd thee first,
When from the heav'nly mansions he came down,
From Sparta to convey thee, and to guard
Thy nuptial bed from Paris, that strong isle,
Stretch'd like a bulwark tow'rd the Attic coast,
In future ages shall from mortals bear
The name of Helena, because it gave thee

A refuge, from thy house in secret borne.
 But to the wand'ring Menelaus the gods
 The island of the blest, by Fate's decree,
 Assign his mansion: for th' immortal pow'rs
 Look not with hatred on the gen'rous spirit;
 But to severer toils th' ignoble doom.

THEOC. Ye sons of Leda and of Jove, I cease
 My contest for your sister, nor 'gainst mine
 Will I unsheath my sword. Let her go home,
 If this be pleasing to the gods: and know
 You have a sister, from the same high race
 With you deriv'd the wisest and the best
 Of all her sex. Farewell, for Helen's sake,
 And for the sake of her most generous mind;
 An excellence in woman seldom found.

1827. This is taken from the *Odyssey*, book iv. where Proteus thus declares his fate to Menelaus,

But, oh below'd by heav'n! reserv'd to thee
 A happier lot the smiling fates decree:
 Free from that law, beneath whose mortal sway
 Matter is chang'd, and varying forms decay;
 Elysium shall be thine; the blissful plains
 Of utmost earth, where Rhadamanthus reigns.
 Joys ever-young, unmix'd with pain or fear,
 Fill the wide circle of th' eternal year:
 Stern winter smiles on that auspicious clime;
 The fields are florid with unfading prime:
 From the bleak pole no winds inclement blow,
 Mould the round hail, or flake the fleecy snow;
 But from the breezy deep the Blest inhale
 The fragrant murmurs of the western gale.
 This grace peculiar will the gods afford
 To thee the son of Jove, and beauteous Helen's lord.

Fenton, l. 761, &c.

'*Ἠλύσιον πεδίον*, the Elysian field in this passage, is the same with the *μακάρων νῆσον*, the island of the blest of Euripides; for Homer fixes it *ἐς πείρατα γαίης*, or, as Milton expresses it, at the earth's green end: but where this happy island lies the ancients were not agreed; modern commentators are more precise: as Homer elsewhere mentions *λευκάδα πύργον*, they will have this to design the same place, translate it *albam insulam*, and then are so obliging as to assure us that Homer marks out Albion, the old name of Britain.

CHOR. With various hand the gods dispense our fates;
Now show'ring various blessings, which our hopes
Dared not aspire to; now controlling ills
We deem'd inevitable: thus the god
To these hath giv'n an end exceeding thought.
Such is the fortune of this happy day.

ELECTRA.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

AUTURGUS

ELECTRA

ORESTES

PYLADES

TUTOR

MESSENGER

CASTOR and POLLUX

CHORUS of MYCENÆAN VIRGINS.

ELECTRA.

THE subject of this Drama is the same with that of the Choephoræ of Æschylus; the disposition of it is different, as might be expected from the different genius of the poets. The reader, who was struck with the sublime conception, the glowing imagery, and solemn magnificence of the Choephoræ, will here find his soul softened with compassion for the high-born Electra forcibly wedded to a peasant, dwelling in a sordid cottage, and compelled to the laborious offices of a menial slave. Our own history gives us an example of the like unfeeling insolence in the low-minded rulers of our unhappy kingdom about the year 1648, who intended to apprentice the princess Elizabeth to a button-maker: the poor lady escaped their malice by dying in prison at Carisbrooke castle. The gentleness of Electra in this humble state, and her faithful attention to the domestic concerns of Auturgus, throw an amiableness over her character, which neither Æschylus nor Sophocles, upon their plans, could give her, and interest us warmly in her favour; and this is but a softer shade of the same generous mind, the same virtuous sense of duty, which shews itself so fierce and determined in encouraging and assisting her brother to revenge their father's murder. The three great poets have taken different methods in the discovery of Orestes

to his sister: in Æschylus this has most dignity, in Sophocles it is most affecting, in Euripides most natural. In the circumstances which lead to the agnition, as the critics call it, our poet is thought to have reflected with an ill-natured severity on Æschylus; “C’est une malice d’Euripide, dit P. Brumoy, pour “tourner la reconnoissance d’Eschyle en ridicule:” if it be so, we are sorry for so ungenerous a return for the many obligations he is under to his great master: but after all, it may well be supposed that the circumstances here reprobated were the popular tradition; for had Æschylus been left to his own invention, his rich imagination would have formed something better; and that Euripides intended only to reject the weak proofs built on this tradition, which, like the prophecy of Celæno and the completion of it in the Æneid, could not be passed over unnoticed: we are led to this supposition by the following circumstance; to the surmise of the faithful preserver of Orestes, that he might have returned in secret, and have paid these honours at the tomb of his father, Electra says,

Unworthy of a wise man are thy words,
If thou canst think that to Mycenæ’s realms
My brother e’er with secret step will come,
Fearing Ægisthus.

This is consistent with the high spirit of Electra; but she censures as unwise not only the circumstances alleged in proof by the old man, but even the method dictated by the god of wisdom; and probably the whole passage intends only to shew that Electra had no idea of her brother’s return, and of course to heighten her surprise and joy at the discovery. The circumstances of Clytemnestra’s death are managed by

Sophocles with wonderful art : the scene, in which Ægisthus uncovers the body expecting to have found that of Orestes, and instantly perceives that vengeance is bursting upon him, is finely conceived, and affords an excellent subject for picture ; but the consequence of this is, that the death of Ægisthus has nothing in it affecting ; he is a malefactor led to execution. Æschylus describes the vindictive prince as rushing upon the adulterous murderer with impatient fury : Euripides is long and minute in his account ; some of the circumstances are pleasing, they all are curious, and highly valuable, as giving an exact picture of the manners and religion of the ancients. Euripides has with great judgment preserved the characters of Orestes and Electra throughout the drama, as they were at first designed by Æschylus ; this has not escaped the censure of some critics ; but the poet is defended with such strength of argument in the Notes on the Art of Poetry, v. 127. that any attempt to a further vindication here would be impertinent.

It may not be improper to observe, that the word Auturgus signifies a man who does his own work with his own hands, and it is used by Euripides in that sense ; the translator hopes to be excused for converting it into a proper name.

The scene is near the bounds of the Argive territory, a mountainous country, and before the cottage of Auturgus.



ELECTRA.

AUT. **T**HOU ancient glory of this land, fam'd stream
Of Inachus, thou saw'st the mighty host,
When in a thousand ships to Phrygia's strand
The royal Agamemnon bore the war.
The Dardan monarch slain, the tow'rs of Troy
And the proud city levell'd with the ground,
To Argos he return'd, and many spoils
From the barbarians rent triumphant fix'd
In the high temples. There his toils were crown'd
With conquest; but by Clytemnestra's wiles,
His wife, and by Ægisthus' murdering hand,
Son of Thyestes, in his house he died;
Leaving the ancient sceptre, from the hands
Of Tantalus to him deriv'd, he fell.
And now Ægisthus lords it o'er the land,
His royal throne possessing, and his wife,
Daughter of Tyndarus. He, when for Troy
He sail'd, his son Orestes in his house
And young Electra's budding beauties left.
Orestes, by Ægisthus mark'd for death,
The guardian of his father's youth by stealth
To Strophius bore, that in the Phocian land
He might protect him. In her father's house
Remain'd Electra: her, when youth's warm bloom
Glow'd on her cheek, the high-born chiefs of Greece
In marriage sought: through fear lest she should bear
To any Argive sons that might revenge
The death of Agamemnon, in the house

Ægisthus held her, and repuls'd the suit
Of ev'ry wooer. But his gloomy fears
Still prompting that by stealth she might bear sons
To one of noble lineage, he resolv'd
To kill her; but her mother, though her soul
Was fierce and ruthless, sav'd her from his hands:
She for her husband's murder had some plea
To urge, but dreaded from her children's blood
Public abhorrence. Then Ægisthus fram'd
These villainous designs, he offer'd gold,
The son of Agamemnon, from this land
Escap'd, whoe'er would kill: To me espous'd
He gives Electra; from Mycenæ sprung
My parents, thus far no reproach is mine,
My race illustrious, but not blest with wealth,
And poverty obscures my noble birth:
To one thus sunk he gave her, that his fears
Might likewise sink; for should she wed a man
Whose high rank gives him lustre, he might rouse
The murder of her father, sleeping now,
And vengeance then might on Ægisthus fall.
Yet, Venus be my witness, by my touch
She hath not been dishonour'd: she is still
A virgin: in my humble state I scorn
Such insult to the daughters of the great.
I grieve too for Orestes, hapless youth,
To me in words allied, should he return
To Argos, and behold his sister plac'd
In marriage so unworthy of her birth.
This some may deem a folly, to receive
A virgin in my house, and touch her not:
But let such know, that by distorted rules
They measure continence, themselves depriv'd.

ELECTRA, AUTURGUS.

ELEC. O dark-brow'd Night, nurse of the golden stars,
In thee this vase sustaining on my head
I to the flowing river bend my steps,

(Not by necessity to this compell'd,
 But to the gods to shew the insolent wrongs
 I suffer from Ægisthus,) and my griefs
 For my lost father to the wide extent
 Of ether breathe: for from the royal house
 Me my destructive mother hath driv'n forth,
 To gratify her husband: having borne
 T' Ægisthus other children, she hath made
 Me and Orestes outcasts from the house.

AUT. Why wilt thou thus, unhappy lady, toil,
 For my sake bearing labours, nor desist
 At my desire? Not thus hast thou been train'd.

ELEC. Thee equal to the gods I deem my friend;
 For in my ills thou hast not treated me
 With insult. In misfortunes thus to find,
 What I have found in thee, a gentle pow'r
 Lenient of grief, must be a mighty source
 Of consolation. It behoves me then.

Far as my pow'r avails, to ease thy toils,
 That lighter thou may'st feel them, and to share
 Thy labour, though unbidden: in the fields
 Thou hast enough of work; be it my task
 Within to order well. The lab'rer, tired
 Abroad, with pleasure to his house returns,
 Accustom'd all things grateful there to find.

AUT. Go then, since such thy will: nor distant far
 The fountain from the house. At the first dawn
 My bullocks yoked I to the field will drive,
 And sow my furrows: for no idle wretch,
 With the gods always in his mouth, can gain
 Without due labour the support of life.

ORESTES, PYLADES.

ORES. O Pylades, thee first of all mankind
 Faithful and friendly I esteem; alone
 Hast thou receiv'd Orestes, held me high
 In thy dear love, thus with misfortunes press'd,
 And suff'ring, as I suffer, dreadful ills,

Wrought by Ægisthus, whose accursed hand,
 And my destructive mother join'd her aid,
 Murder'd my father. But the Argive soil,
 Commanded by the god's oracular voice,
 No mortal conscious to my steps, I tread,
 His murder on his murd'ers to avenge.
 This night my father's tomb have I approach'd,
 Pour'd the warm tear, presented my shorn locks,
 And offer'd on the pyre the victim's blood,
 Secret from those who lord it o'er this land.
 The walls I enter not, a double charge
 At once emprising, to the Argive bounds
 I come, that by the tyrant's spies if known
 I to another's realms may soon retire ;
 And seek my sister ; for they say that here
 In marriage join'd she dwells, a virgin now
 No more : with her I would hold converse, her
 Take my associate in this deed, and learn
 All that hath pass'd within the walls. But now,
 For now the grey morn opes her radiant eye,
 Retire we from this public path : perchance
 Some ploughman, or some female slave, from whom
 We may gain knowledge, may in sight appear.
 And see, a female slave, her tresses shorn,
 Bears from the spring her vase : sit we awhile,
 And question her, if haply from her words
 We may learn aught for which we hither came.

ELECTRA.

STRO.

Begin, begin, for this the hour,
 The mournful measures weeping pour.
 Is there a wretch like me on earth ?
 The royal Agamemnon gave me birth,
 My mother Clytemnestra, shame
 Fall on that odious name !
 And me each tongue within Mycenæ's walls
 Th' unhappy, lost Electra calls.
 My soul to grief a prey,

My hated life in anguish wastes away:
 My tears for thee, my father, flow,
 For in the shades below,
 By curs'd Ægisthus and his barb'rous wife,
 Ah me, ah me, my miseries !
 Basely depriv'd of life,
 The royal Agamemnon lies.
 Yet once more raise the tearful strain,
 The sweetly-mournful measures sooth my pain.

ANTIS. Begin, begin, for this the hour,
 The mournful members weeping pour.
 Unhappy brother, in what state,
 What house is cruel servitude thy fate,
 Thy sister, in those rooms confin'd
 Once by her sire assign'd
 The chaste retirement of her happier years,
 Thy wretched sister left to tears,
 Tears which incessant flow
 From the deep anguish of severest woe ?
 O may'st thou come, (O Jove, O Jove,
 Hear from thy throne above !)
 To sooth the pangs my tortur'd heart that rend :
 T' avenge thy father basely slain,
 May'st thou to Argos bend
 Thy weary, wand'ring foot again.—
 Take from my head this vase, that high
 May swell the mournful nightly melody.—

EPOD. The dismal song, the song of death,
 To thee, my father, will I raise,
 To thee among the shades beneath :
 So pass my mournful days.
 For thee my bleeding breast I tear,
 And beat my head, and rend my hair,
 Shorn as an off'ring to the dead :
 Yes, poor Electra beat thy head.
 As some broad-rolling stream along,
 For his lost father torn away,
 Caught in the wily net a prey,

The tuneful cygnet pours the song ;
 So thee, my father, I lament,
 In thy last bath depriv'd of breath,
 Stretch'd on the bed of death :
 So I deplore the curst intent
 Form'd 'gainst thy sad return from Troy,
 The keen axe furious to destroy.
 For thee no crown thy wife design'd,
 No festive wreath thy brows to bind,
 But the relentless trenchant sword ;
 And, by her raging passions led.
 Aids the base murd'rer's deed abhorr'd,
 Then takes him to her bed.

ELECTRA, CHORUS.

CHORUS.

STRO. 1. Daughter of Agamemnon, I with speed,
 Electra, to thy rustic cottage fly :
 For one, whose herds on these rude mountains feed,
 A swain, on whose good faith we firm rely,
 Came, from Mycenæ came ;
 The Argives, thus he says, proclaim
 Three days of festal rites divine,
 And all the virgins haste to Juno's shrine.

ELECTRA.

STRO. 2. No more, my friends, the gorgeous vest,
 Which in her happier hours Electra grac'd,
 No more the gem in gold enchas'd,
 With vivid radiance sparkling on my breast,
 Delight my mind : my feet no more
 The mazy-winding dance shall tread,
 No more the train of Argive virgins lead.
 In tears, ah me ! I melt away ;
 In tears, sad solace of each wretched day.
 My ceaseless mis'ries I deplore.
 My sordid toils these locks defile,
 Around me see these vestments vile :

Of Agamemnon's daughter this the fate?
 Where now my father's royal state?
 Where the proud glories of his name,
 And Troy recording sad her conqueror's mighty fame?

CHORUS.

ANTIS. 1. Great is the goddess: go then, with us go;
 Receive whate'er thy beauties may improve,
 The gold, the vests with various dyes that glow.
 Think'st thou with tears th' unhonour'd gods to move?
 Not won by sighs their aid,
 But by pure vows with rev'rence paid,
 The gods, to crush thy foes, will send,
 And blessings on thy future days t' attend.

ELECTRA.

ANTIS. 2. My cries, my vows no god will hear,
 Nor heeded they my father's spouting gore.
 Ah me! the murder'd I deplore,
 And for the living exile pour the tear:
 He, distant from his native land,
 Wanders, poor outcast, o'er the earth,
 And seeks mean refuge at some servile hearth,
 Dragging from realm to realm his woes,
 Though in his veins the blood of monarchs flows.
 I, by oppression's iron hand
 Driv'n from my father's royal seat,
 Dwell in this low obscure retreat,
 Here waste in toils my wretched life away,
 Or o'er the rugged mountains stray:
 Whilst, glorying in her impious deeds,
 My mother to her bed the blood-stain'd murd'rer leads.

CHOR. The sister of thy mother, Helena,
 Hath been the cause of many ills to Greece,
 And to thy house.

ELEC. Ah me! ye female train,
 My measures I break off: some strangers, lodg'd

Nigh to the cottage, from their ambush rise.
Fly by the path, I to the house will fly;
Let us be swift t' escape their ruffian hands.

ORESTES, PYLADES, ELECTRA, CHORUS.

- ORES. Stay, thou unhappy; fear not aught from me.
ELEC. Thee, Phœbus, that I die not, I implore.
ORES. Others more hated would I rather kill.
ELEC. Away, nor touch one whom thou ought'st not touch.
ORES. There is not whom more justly I may touch.
ELEC. Why with thy sword in ambush near my house?
ORES. Stay, hear; not vain thy stay thou soon shalt own.
ELEC. I stay; the stronger thou, I in thy pow'r.
ORES. Bearing thy brother's words to thee I come.
ELEC. Most welcome: breathes he yet this vital air?
ORES. He lives: I first would speak what brings thee joy.
ELEC. Oh be thou blest for these most grateful words!
ORES. To both in common this I give to share.
ELEC. Where is th' unhappy outcast wand'ring now?
ORES. He wastes his life not subject to one state.
ELEC. Finds he with toil what life each day requires?
ORES. Not so: but mean the wand'ring exile's state.
ELEC. But with what message art thou from him charg'd?
ORES. T' enquire, if living, where thou bear'st thy griefs.
ELEC. First then observe my thin and wasted state.
ORES. Wasted with grief, so that I pity thee.
ELEC. Behold my head, its crisped honours shorn.
ORES. Mourning thy brother, or thy father dead?
ELEC. What can be dearer to my soul than these?
ORES. Alas! What deem'st thou are thy brother's thoughts?

240. Whilst Electra goes to the fountain, Orestes and Pylades turn aside from the public path, and come near to the house; they see her returning, and sit down till she should come up to them. She, thinking herself alone, sings her mournful strain: the Chorus joins her: Orestes hears her song, and her conversation with these virgins, from thence he knows her to be his sister: as Electra and her female friends advance together near to the place where Orestes and Pylades were sitting, they rise, *ἰζανίσανται*: the poet had before particularly marked their position, *ἰζαμίσθαι*, v. 109.

- ELEC. He, though far distant, is most dear to me.
ORES. Why here thy dwelling from the city far?
ELEC. O stranger, in base nuptials I am join'd.
ORES. I feel thy brother's grief: To one of rank?
ELEC. Not as my father once to place me hop'd?
ORES. That hearing I may tell thy brother, speak.
ELEC. This is his house: in this I dwell remote.
ORES. This house some digger, or some herdsman suits.
ELEC. Generous, though poor, in reverence me he holds.
ORES. To thee what reverence doth thy husband pay!
ELEC. He never hath presum'd t' approach my bed.
ORES. Through sacred chastity, or from disdain?
ELEC. Scorning my noble parents to disgrace.
ORES. How in such nuptials feels he not a pride?
ELEC. Him, who affied me, not my lord he deems.
ORES. Thinking Orestes might revenge the wrong?
ELEC. This too he fears; yet modest is his mind.
ORES. A generous man, and one who merits much.
ELEC. If to his house the absent e'er returns.
ORES. But this debasement could thy mother brook?
ELEC. Their husbands, not their children, wives regard.
ORES. Why did Ægisthus offer this base wrong?
ELEC. Thus placing me, he wish'd my children weak.
ORES. That from thee no avengers might arise.
ELEC. For this design may vengeance on him fall.
ORES. That yet thou art a virgin doth he know?
ELEC. He knows it not: this undisclos'd we hold.
ORES. Are these, who hear us, faithful, and thy friends?
ELEC. Never thy words or mine will they disclose.
ORES. What should Orestes do, if he return?
ELEC. Canst thou ask this? How base! The time now calls——
ORES. But how thy father's murd'ers should he slay?
ELEC. Daring to do what they, who slew him, dar'd.
ORES. Cou'dst thou, with him, thy mother bear to kill!
ELEC. With the same axe, by which my father fell.
ORES. This may I tell him, and thy soul resolv'd?
ELEC. My mother's blood first shedding, might I die!
ORES. Oh were Orestes nigh, to hear these words!

- ELEC. If seen, I should not know him, stranger, now.
ORES. No wonder, for when parted both were young.
ELEC. Nor by my friends, save one, would he be known.
ORES. Who bore him, as they say, by stealth from death?
ELEC. The aged guardian of my father's youth.
ORES. Was thy dead father honour'd with a tomb?
ELEC. As he was honour'd, from the house cast forth.
ORES. Alas the barbarous deed! A sense of ills,
Which strangers suffer, wounds the human heart.
• But speak, that to thy brother I may bear,
By thee inform'd, words which perchance may wound
His ear, but which concerns him much to know.
Those, who have knowledge, feel the tender touch
Of pity, not th' unknowing: yet to know
Too much, is oft the bitter source of grief.
CHOR. My soul is with the same desire inflam'd:
For, from the city distant, nought I know
Of the ills there; I wish to be inform'd.
ELEC. I would speak, if I might; and to a friend
May I not speak my suffering father's wrongs,
And mine? But, stranger, since to this discourse
Thou dost enforce me, I conjure thee tell
Orestes his calamities, and mine.
Tell him in what mean garb thou seest me clad,
How sordid, and beneath what lowly roof,
Born as I was to royalty, I lodge.
I, labouring at the loom the lengthen'd robe,
Shall want the vest to clothe my nakedness:
And, bearing water from the flowing fount,
No more partaker of the feast, no more
Myself a virgin, 'midst the virgin train
Leading the dance, to them I bid adieu,
To Castor also bid adieu, to whom,
E'er to the gods advanc'd, I was betroth'd,
As from the same illustrious lineage sprung.
Mean time my mother 'midst the Phrygian spoils
Sits on her throne, the Asiatic dames,
Made by my father's conquest slaves, attend

Her state, their rich Idæan vests confin'd
 With clasps of gold, my father's clodded gore
 Yet putrid in the house; and the same car,
 In which my father rode, his murderer mounts;
 The sceptre, ensign of his kingly sway
 O'er Greece in arms confederate, he with pride
 Grasps in his bloody hands. The monarch's tomb
 Unhonour'd nor libations hath receiv'd,
 Nor myrtle bough; no hallow'd ornament
 Hath dignified the pyre: inflam'd with wine
 My mother's husband, the illustrious lord,
 For so they call him, tramples on the earth
 Insultingly where Agamemnon lies;
 And hurling 'gainst his monument a stone,
 Thus taunts us with proud scorn, "Where is thy son,
 "Orestes where? right noble is thy tomb
 "Protected by his presence." Thus he mocks
 The absent: but, O stranger, tell him this,
 Suppliant I beg thee. Many give the charge,
 And I interpret it; my hands, my tongue,
 My mind desponding with its grief, my head
 Shorn of its tresses, and his father. Shame,
 Base shame it were if, when his father's arm
 Subdued the Trojans, he should want the pow'r
 Alone to hurl his vengeance on one man,
 Now in youth's prime, and from a nobler sire.

CHOR. But see, the man, thy husband, to his toils
 Giving a respite, hastens to his house.

AUTURGUS, ELECTRA, ORESTES, PYLADES,
 CHORUS.

AUT. Ha! who these strangers, whom before my doors
 I see? Why come they to these rustic gates?
 Of me aught want they? With young men to stand
 Abroad, a woman's honour ill beseems.

ELEC. Thou faithful friend, let no suspicion touch
 Thy mind: their converse truly shalt thou know.
 These by Orestes charg'd, are come to me.

Strangers, forgive what he hath said amiss.

AUT. What say they? Lives he? Is he yet a man?

ELEC. He lives, they say, and speak what wins my faith.

AUT. Remembers he his father, and thy wrongs?

ELEC. This lives in hope; an exile's state is weak.

AUT. What from Orestes come they to relate?

ELEC. He sent them secret to observe my ills.

AUT. Some they behold, and some thou may'st relate.

ELEC. They know them, of each circumstance inform'd.

AUT. Then long ago my lowly doors to them
Should have been open'd. Enter ye the house;
And for your welcome tidings you shall share
Such hospitable viands as the stores
Of my poor mansion yield. You, who attend,
What for their journey needful they have brought
Bear in: nor you refuse; for you are come
Friends to a friendly man: poor though I am,
A sordid spirit never will I shew.

ORES. Now by the gods, is this the man, who holds
Thy marriage in such holy reverence,
Scorning to do Orestes shameful wrong?

ELEC. The poor Electra's husband this is call'd.

ORES. Nature hath giv'n no outward mark to note
The generous mind: the qualities of men
To sense are indistinct. I oft have seen
One of no worth a noble father shame,
And from vile parents worthy children spring,
Meanness oft grov'ling in the rich man's mind,
And oft exalted spirits in the poor.
How then discerning shall we judge aright?
By riches? ill would they abide the test:
By poverty? on poverty awaits
This ill, through want it prompts to sordid deeds:
Shall we pronounce by arms? but who can judge,
By looking on the spear, the dauntless heart?
Such judgment is fallacious: for this man,
Nor great among the Argives, nor elate
With the proud honours of his house, his rank

Plebeian, hath approv'd his liberal heart.
 Will you not then learn wisdom, you whose minds
 Error with false presentments leads astray?
 Will you not learn by manners and by deeds
 To judge the noble? Such discharge their trust
 With honour to the state, and to their house:
 Mere flesh, without a spirit, is no more
 Than statues in the forum: nor in war
 Doth the strong arm the dang'rous shock abide
 More than the weak: on nature this depends,
 And an intrepid mind. But we accept
 Thy hospitable kindness: for the son
 Of Agamemnon, for whose sake we come,
 Present or not, is worthy: to this house
 Go, my attendants; I must enter it:
 This man, though poor, more cheerful than the rich
 Receives me; to his kindness thanks are due.
 More would it joy me if thy brother, blest
 Himself, could lead me to his prosperous house;
 Yet haply he may come; th' oracular voice
 Of Phœbus firmly will be ratified:
 Lightly of human prophecies I deem.

Orestes and his attendants enter the house.

- CHOR. Ne'er till this hour, Electra, were our hearts
 So warm'd with joy: for fortune now perchance,
 Though slow in her advance, may firmly stand.
 ELEC. Why, thou unhappy, of thy humble house
 Knowing the penury, wou'dst thou receive
 Such guests, of rank superior to thine own?
 AUT. Why not? If they are noble, so their port
 Denotes them, will they not alike enjoy
 Contentment, be their viands mean or rich?
 ELEC. Since thou hast done what suits not thy low state,
 To my lov'd father's aged guardian go;
 He near the river Tanus, which divides
 The realms of Argos from the Spartan land,
 An outcast from the city, leads his herds:
 Entreat him to attend thee to thy house,

Supplying what may entertain thy guests.
 He will rejoice, presenting to the gods
 His vows, when he shall hear the son, preserv'd
 By him, yet lives: for from my father's house
 We from my mother nothing should receive;
 And bitter were the tidings, should she learn,
 What most would grieve her, that Orestes lives.

AUT. These words, since such thy pleasure, I will bear
 To the old man. But enter thou the house
 With speed, and all things set in order there:
 For many things a woman, be her thoughts
 Intent, may find to form the grateful feast:
 And in the house such plenty yet remains,
 As for one day may well supply their wants.
 Yet on such subjects when my thoughts are turn'd,
 I deem of wealth as having mighty pow'r
 To give the stranger welcome, and to aid
 The body when afflicted with disease:
 But of small moment to the daily food
 Which nature craves; for to supply her wants
 An equal measure serves the rich and poor.

CHORUS.

STRO. 1. Ye gallant ships, that o'er the main
 Rush'd with innumerable oars,
 Dancing amidst the Nereid train
 To Troy's detested shores;
 Your dark-beak'd prows whilst wanton round
 The pipe enamour'd dolphins bound,
 The son of Thetis pleas'd to guide
 Achilles, leaping on the strand,

480. The dolphins were thought by the ancients to be delighted with music: hence the poet finely describes them as gamboling around the Grecian ships, whose oars kept stroke to the tune of flutes. The story of Arion is well known.

482. Κοῦρον ἄλμα ποδῶν, v. 439. signifies something more than the swiftness of Achilles. An oracle had declared, that whoever of the Grecians should with his feet first touch the Trojan strand, should first be slain: Achilles, to encourage the troops to land, threw his shield on the shore, and leaped out of his ship upon it:

(With Agamemnon's martial band)
Where Simois rolls his tide.

ANTIS. 1. The Nereids left th' Eubœan shore,
And arms divinely bright
For Vulcan's golden anvils bore:
O'er Pelion's rocky height,
O'er sacred Ossa's wood-crown'd brow,
Which shews the nymphs the plains below,
They pass'd, the warlike father where
Th' heroic son of Thetis bred,
The pride of Greece, by glory led
Th' Atridæ's toils to share.

STRO. 2. One, who the spoils of Troy had shar'd,
I saw in Nauplia's port, and raptur'd hung,
O son of Thetis, on his tongue,
Whilst he the glories of thy shield declar'd;
On its bright orb what figures rise,
Terrific to the Phrygians' eyes:
Grasping the Gorgon's head, the verge around,
With waving wings his sandals bound,
A sculptur'd Perseus rises o'er the main:
Protector of the pastur'd plain,
Hermes, the messenger of Jove
Seems with the favour'd chief his golden wings to move.

this was the suggestion of Ulysses: immediately Protesilaus leaped upon the strand, and as he was the first that touched it with his feet, he was the first slain.

503. Perseus is generally described with wings on his helmet and sandals; these he received from Mercury, who concurred with Jupiter and Minerva in protecting this hero, and is here his attendant. Ovid therefore with great judgment makes Perseus, after his conquests, build altars to these three deities,

Diis tribus ille focus totidem de cespite ponit;
Lævum Mercurio; dextrum tibi bellica virgo;
Ara Jovis media est. *Met.* l. iv. v. 752.

504. Why Mercury hath here the appellation of *αγροτης* is not agreed. Barnes interprets it *ferox*, *Musgrave* *venator*; *Carmeli* translates it *aspro e feroce*: *Heath* renders it *agrestis*, and thinks that Mercury is so called because he was born and educated in Arcadia, and was particularly the protector of that country. *Natalis Comes*, mentioning the story of Battus, tells us, upon the authority of *Pausanias*, that Mercury after that adventure was worshipped as the god of shepherds.

ANTIS. 2. Full in the midst the orb of day
 In all its radiance blazes through the sky;
 The fiery coursers seem to fly.
 And silent rolling o'er the ethereal way
 The stars refulgent through the night,
 To Hector's eyes a dreadful sight,
 High on the helmet Sphinxes glow in gold,
 Who, whilst their prey their talons hold,
 In triumph seem their barb'rous song to pour.
 The richly burnish'd hauberk o'er,
 Breathing fierce flames, with horrid speed
 The dire Chimæra springs to seize Pirene's steed.

EPOD. Dreadful the blood-stain'd spear; the car
 Four coursers whirl amidst the war,
 Behind them clouds of dust black-rising roll.
 Such martial chiefs the monarch led;
 Yet by an hand accurs'd he bled,
 By his wife's hand: her noble blood
 From the rich streams of Tyndarus flow'd,
 But deeds of horror darken on her soul.
 Yet may the gods' avenging pow'r
 On thee their righteous fury show'r;
 Yet may thy neck the falchion wound,
 Yet may I see thy blood distain the ground!

Old TUTOR, ELECTRA, CHORUS.

TUT. Where is my honour'd mistress, my lov'd child,
 Daughter of Agamemnon, once my charge?
 Steep to her house and difficult th' ascent;
 With pain my age-enfeebled feet advance,

518. The dire Chimæra's conquest was enjoind;
 A mingled monster, of no mortal kind;
 Behind a dragon's fiery tail was spread;
 A goat's rough body bore a lion's head;
 Her pitchy nostrils flaky flames expire;
 Her gaping throat emits infernal fire. *Pope, Iliad vi.*

The monster is here described as in the act of springing upon Pegasus, on which the hero rode.

Yet lab'ring onwards with bent knees I move
To seek my friends. O daughter, for mine eyes
Before the house behold thee, I am come
Bringing this tender youngling from my fold,
These garlands, from the vases these fresh curds,
And this small flask of old and treasur'd wine
Of grateful odour; scanty the supply,
Yet, with aught weaker if allay'd, the cup
Will yield a grateful bev'rage. Let one bear
Into the house these presents for thy guests.
I with these tatter'd vests meanwhile will wipe
Mine eyes, for they are wet with gushing tears.

ELEC. Why, good old man, thus wet thy tearful eyes?
After this length of time dost thou recal
The memory of my ills? or mourn the flight
Of poor Orestes, or my father's fate,
Whom, in thy hands sustaining, once thy care
Nurtur'd, to thee and to thy friends in vain?

TUT. In vain: but this my soul could not support;
For to his tomb, as on the way I came,
I turn'd aside, and falling on the ground,
Alone and unobserv'd, indulg'd my tears;
Then of the wine, brought for thy stranger guests,
Made a libation, and around the tomb
Plac'd myrtle branches; on the pyre I saw
A sable ewe, yet fresh the victim's blood,
And clust'ring auburn locks shorn from some head:
I marvell'd, O my child, what man had dar'd
Approach the tomb, for this no Argive dares:
Perchance with secret step thy brother came,
And paid these honours to his father's tomb.
But view these locks, compare them with thine own,
Whether like thine their colour: nature loves
In those, who from one father draw their blood,
In many points a likeness to preserve.

ELEC. Unworthy of a wise man are thy words,
If thou canst think that to Mycenæ's realms
My brother e'er with secret step will come,

Fearing Ægisthus: then between our locks
 What can th' agreement be? To manly toils
 He in the rough palæstra hath been train'd,
 Mine by the comb are soften'd; so that hence
 Nothing may be inferr'd: besides, old man,
 Tresses like-colour'd often may'st thou find,
 Where not one drop of kindred blood is shar'd.

TUT. Trace but his footsteps, mark th' impression, see
 If of the same dimensions with thy feet.

ELEC. How can th' impression of his foot be left
 On hard and rocky ground? But were it so,
 Brother and sister never can have foot
 Of like dimensions: larger is the man's.

TUT. But hath thy brother, should he come, no vest
 Which thou wou'dst know, the texture of thy hands,
 In which, when snatch'd from death, he was array'd?

ELEC. Know'st thou not, when my brother from this land
 Was sav'd, I was but young? But were his vests
 Wrought by my hands, then infant as he was,
 How could he now, in his maturer age,
 Be in the same array'd, unless his vests
 Grew with his person's growth? No: at the tomb
 Some stranger, touch'd with pity, shear'd his locks,
 Or native, by the tyrant's spies unmark'd.

TUT. Where are these strangers? I would see them: much
 Touching thy brother wish I to enquire.

ELEC. See, from the house with hast'ning step they come.

ORESTES, PYLADES, ELECTRA, TUTOR, CHORUS.

TUT. Their port is noble: but th' exterior form
 Oft cheats the eye; many of noble port
 Are base: yet will I bid the strangers hail.

ORES. Hail, hoary sire! Electra, of what friend
 Doth chance present us the rever'd remains?

ELEC. The guardian, strangers, of my father's youth.

ORES. Is this the man, who bore thy brother hence?

ELEC. The man who sav'd him this, if yet he lives.

ORES. Why doth he scan me with that curious eye,
As if inspecting some bright impress mark'd
On silver? Some resemblance doth he trace?

ELEC. In thee he pleas'd may mark my brother's years.

ORES. A much-lov'd man. Why wheels he round me thus?

ELEC. I too am struck with wonder, seeing this.

TUT. My dear, my honour'd child, address the gods.

ELEC. For what? some absent, or some present good?

TUT. To hold the treasure, which the god presents.

ELEC. See, I address the gods: what wou'dst thou say.

TUT. Look now on him, my child, that dearest youth.

ELEC. I fear'd before thy senses were not sound.

TUT. My sense not sound, when I Orestes see!

ELEC. Why speakest thou what all my hopes exceeds?

TUT. In him beholding Agamemnon's son.

ELEC. What mark hast thou observ'd, to win my faith?

TUT. That scar above his eyebrow, from a fall
Imprinted deep, as in his father's house
He long ago, with thee, pursued an hind.

ELEC. I see the mark remaining from his fall.

TUT. Why the most dear delay'st thou yet t' embrace?

ELEC. No longer now will I delay: the marks
By thee discover'd are persuasive proofs.
O thou at length return'd, beyond my hopes
Thus I embrace thee.

ORES. And my arms at last
Thus fondly clasp thee.

ELEC. This I never thought;

ORES. Nor could I hope it.

ELEC. Art thou he indeed?

ORES. Alone to thee in firm alliance join'd,
If well this net, my present task, I draw.

ELEC. I am assured; or never must we more
Believe that there are gods, if impious wrongs
Triumphant over justice bear the sway.

CHOR. Yes, thou art come, O ling'ring day,
At length art come, and beaming bright
Shew'st to Mycenæ's state his glorious light,

Who, from his father's palace chas'd,
A wretched wand'rer long disgrac'd,
Cheers us with his returning ray.
Some god, some god, my royal friend,
Back our own radiant Victory leads.
Raise then thy hands, and to the skies
Let for thy brother suppliant vows arise,
That, as with daring foot he treads,
Success, success may on his steps attend.

ORES. So may it be. With joy thy dear embrace
I now receive: at length the time will come
When it shall be repeated. But, old man,
For opportune thy coming, tell me now
What I shall do on the base murd'rer's head,
And on my mother's, who impurely shares
His nuptial bed, t' avenge my father's death.
Have I no friend at Argos? not one left
Benevolent? are, with my fortunes, all
Entirely lost? to whom shall I apply?
Doth the night suit my purpose, or the day?
Or which way shall I turn against my foes?

TUT. Amidst thy ruin'd fortunes, O my son,
Thou hast no friend. Where shall the man be found
Prompt in a prosp'rous or an adverse state
Alike to share? But learn this truth from me,
For of thy friends thou wholly art bereft,
Nor doth e'en hope remain, in thine own hand
Now, and in fortune, thou hast all wherewith
To gain thy father's house and regal state.

ORES. What shall we do t' effect this glorious end?

TUT. Ægisthus and thy mother thou must kill.

ORES. For that I come: but how obtain that crown?

TUT. Thou can'st not enter, if thou wou'dst, the walls.

ORES. With guards defended, and with spear-arm'd hands?

TUT. Aye: for he fears thee, nor untroubled sleeps.

ORES. Well; let thine age some counsel then impart.

TUT. Hear me: this now hath to my thought occur'd.

ORES. May'st thou point out and I perceive some good!

- TUT. I saw Ægisthus, hither as I came.
ORES. I am attentive to thee : in what place ?
TUT. Near to those meadows, where his coursers feed.
ORES. What doing ? Hope arises from despair.
TUT. A feast, it seems, preparing to the Nymphs.
ORES. Grateful for children born, or vows for more ?
TUT. I know but this, the victims were prepar'd.
ORES. With him what men ? Or with his slaves alone ?
TUT. No Argive there, but his domestic train.
ORES. Is there who would discover me, if seen ?
TUT. No : these are slaves who never saw thy face.
ORES. To me, if I prevail, they might be friends.
TUT. Such the slave's nature : but this favours thee.
ORES. How to his person near shall I approach ?
TUT. Beneath his eye pass when the victims bleed.
ORES. That way, it seems, some pastur'd fields are his.
TUT. That he may call thee to partake the feast.
ORES. A bitter guest, if so it please the gods.
TUT. Then, as th' occasion points, thy measures form.
ORES. Well hast thou said. But where my mother now ?
TUT. At Argos ; but the feast she soon will grace.
ORES. Why not together with her husband come ?
TUT. Dreading the people's just reproach, she stay'd.
ORES. She knows then the suspicions of the state ?
TUT. She does : the impious woman all abhor.
ORES. How then together shall I slay them both ?
ELEC. I will form measures for my mother's death.
ORES. Fortune shall guide them to a good event.
ELEC. May she in this be aiding to us both !
ORES. It shall be so : but what dost thou devise ?
ELEC. To Clytemnestra go, old man, and say
To a male child Electra hath giv'n birth.
TUT. That she long since, or lately bore this child ?
ELEC. Tell her the days require the lustral rites.
ORES. And how thy mother's death doth this effect ?
ELEC. Hearing my child-bed illness, she will come.
TUT. She hath no tenderness for thee, my child.
ELEC. Nay, my parturient honours she will weep.

- TUT. Perchance she may: but brief thy purpose speak.
- ELEC. Death, certain death awaits her, if she comes.
- TUT. Within these gates then let her set her feet.
- ELEC. Soon to the gates of Pluto shall she turn.
- TUT. Might I see this, with pleasure I would die.
- ELEC. First then, old man, conduct him to the place.
- TUT. 'The hallow'd victims where Ægisthus slays?
- ELEC. Then meet my mother, and relate my words.
- TUT. 'That she shall think them utter'd by thy lips.
- ELEC. * Now is thy task: by thee he first must bleed.
- ORES. Had I a guide, this instant would I go.
- TUT. Thy steps with ready zeal I will direct.
- ORES. God of my country, god of vengeance, Jove,
Oh pity us! our sufferings pity claim.
- ELEC. Pity us, for our race from thee we draw!
- ORES. And thou, whose altars at Mycenæ blaze,
Imperial Juno, give us victory,
If in a righteous cause we ask thy aid!
- ELEC. Oh give us to avenge our father's death!
- ORES. And thou, my father, who beneath the earth
Hast thy dark dwelling, through unholy deeds,
(And thou, O Earth, to whom I stretch my hands,
Great queen) protect thy children, O protect
Thy most dear children: come, and with thee bring,
To aid our cause, each mighty dead, that shook
The spcar with thee, and with thee conquer'd Troy!
Hear'st thou so foully by my mother wrong'd,
And all, the impious murderers who abhor?
- ELEC. All this, I know, my father hears: but now
The time demands thee: go: by thy bold hand,
I charge thee, let the vile Ægisthus die:
For in the fatal contest shou'dst thou fall,
My life too ends; nor say thou that I live,
For I will plunge the sword into my throat.
This go I to prepare. If glad report
Of thy success arrive, then all the house

Shall echo to my joy : but shou'dst thou die,
All otherwise. Thou hear'st what I resolve.

ORES. I know it all.

ELEC. In this behoves thee much
To be a man.—Ye women, let your voice
Give signal, like a flaming beacon, how
The contest ends: I will keep watch within,
Holding the keen sword ready in my hands;
For never shall my body from my foes,
If I must fall, indecent outrage bear.

CHORUS.

STRO. 1. The Argive mountains round,
'Mongst tales of ancient days
From age to age recorded this remains:
Tun'd to mellifluous lays
Pan taught his pipe to sound,
And as he breath'd the sprightly-swelling strains,
The beauteous ram with fleece of gold,
God of shepherds on he drove.
The herald from the rock above
Proclaims, "Your monarch's wonders to behold
"Wonders to sight, from which no terrors flow,
"Go, Mycenæans, to th' assembly go."
With rev'rence they obey the call,
And fill th' Atridæ's spacious hall.

ANTIS. 1. Its gates with gold o'erlaid
Wide oped each Argive shrine,
And from the altars hallow'd flames arise;
Amidst the rites divine,
Joying the Muse to aid,
Breath'd the brisk pipe its sweet notes to the skies;
Accordant to the tuneful strain
Swell'd the loud-acclaiming voice,
Now with Thyestes to rejoice:

786. Atreus and Thyestes, on the decease of their father Pelops, contended for the succession: at length they agreed that the regal power should devolve on him who could shew something miraculous to the people. Atreus among his flocks

He, all on fire the glorious prize to gain,
 With secret love the wife of Atreus won,
 And thus the shining wonder made his own;
 Then to th' assembly vaunting cried,
 " Mine is the rich Ram's golden pride."

STRO. 2. Then, oh then, indignant Jove
 Bade the bright sun backward move,
 And the golden orb of day,
 And the Morning's orient ray:
 Glaring o'er the western sky
 Hurl'd his ruddy lightnings fly:
 Clouds, no more to fall in rain,
 Northward roll their deep'ning train:
 Libyan Ammon's thirsty seat,
 Wither'd with the scorching heat,
 Feels nor show'rs nor heav'nly dews
 Grateful moisture round diffuse.

ANTIS. 2. Fame hath said (but light I hold
 What the voice of fame hath told)
 That the sun, retiring far,
 Backward roll'd his golden car,
 And his vital heat withdrew,
 Sick'ning man's bold crimes to view.
 Mortals, when such tales they hear,
 Tremble with an holy fear,
 And th' offended gods adore:
 She, this noble pair who bore,
 Dar'd to murder, deed abhorr'd!
 This forgot, her royal lord.

CHOR. Ah me, ah me! Heard you a noise, my friends?
 Or doth imagination startle me
 With vain alarms? Not indistinct the sounds,
 Like Jove's low-mutt'ring thunder, roll along.
 Come from the house, rever'd Electra, come.

had a Ram, whose fleece was of gold: this Thyestes fraudulently obtained, by corrupting Aërope, his brother's wife, and shewing it to the people, as something miraculous, claimed the sovereignty.

ELECTRA, CHORUS,

ELEC. What hath befall'n, my friends, what danger comes?

CHOR. This only know I, death is in that noise.

ELEC. I heard it, distant, yet it reach'd my ear.

CHOR. The sound comes rolling from afar, yet plain.

ELEC. Comes from an Argive, or my friends, the groan?

CHOR. I know not: for confus'd the voices rise.

ELEC. This must to me be death: why then delay?

CHOR. Forbear: that clear thou may'st thy fortunes know.

ELEC. No: we are vanquish'd: none with tidings comes.

CHOR. They will: not light t' effect a monarch's death.

MESSENGER, ELECTRA, CHORUS.

MESS. To you, ye virgins of Mycenæ, joy
I bring, to all his friends my message speaks;
Orestes is victorious, on the ground
Ægisthus, Agamemnon's murd'rer, lies.
Behoves you then address th' immortal gods.

ELEC. And who art thou? How wilt thou prove thy truth?

MESS. Thy brother's servant know'st thou not in me?

ELEC. O thou most welcome, through my fears I scarce
Distinguish'd thee: I recognize thee now.
What, is my father's hated murd'rer dead?

MESS. Twice, what thou wishest, I his death announce.

CHOR. All-seeing justice, thou at length art come.

ELEC. What was the manner of his death? How fell
This vile son of Thyestes? I would know.

MESS. Departing from this house, the level road
We enter'd soon, mark'd by the chariot-wheel
On either side. Mycenæ's noble king
Was there, amidst his gardens with fresh streams
Irriguous walking, and the tender boughs
Of myrtles, for a wreath to bind his head,
He cropt; he saw us, he address'd us thus
Aloud, Hail, strangers: who are ye, and whence,

837. This shews that the attendants, whom Auturgus addresses l. 392, were the servants of Orestes. P. Brumoy supposes them to be the domestics of Auturgus.

Come from what country? Then Orestes said,
Thessalians; victims to Olympian Jove
We, at the stream of Alpheus, go to slay.
The king replied, Be now my guests, and share
The feast with me; a bullock to the Nymphs
I sacrifice; at morn's first dawn arise,
Then you shall go: but enter now my house.
Thus as he spoke, he took us by the hand,
And led us nothing loth: beneath his roof
Soon as we came, he bade his slaves prepare
Baths for the strangers, that the altars nigh,
Beside the lustral ewers, they might stand:
Orestes then, With lavers from the pure
And living stream we lately have been cleans'd:
But with thy citizens these rites to share
If strangers are permitted, we, O king,
Are ready to thy hospitable feast
Nothing averse. The converse here had end.
Their spears, with which they guard the king, aside
Th' attendants laid; and to their office all
Applied their hands: some led the victim, some
The basket bore, some rais'd the flames, and plac'd
The cauldrons on the hearth: the house resounds.
Thy mother's husband on the altars cast
The salted cakes, and thus address'd his vows,
Ye Nymphs that haunt the rocks, these hallow'd rites
Oft let me pay, and of my royal spouse
Now absent, both by fortune blest as now,
And let our foes, as now, in ruin lie;
Thee and Orestes naming. But my lord
Far other vows address'd, but gave his words
No utterance, to regain his father's house.
Ægisthus then the sacrificing sword
Took from the basket, from the bullock's front
To cut the hair, which on the hallow'd fire
With his right hand he threw, and as his slaves
The victim held, beneath its shoulder plung'd
The blade; then turning to thy brother spoke,

Amongst her noble arts Thessalia boasts
To rein the fiery courser, and with skill
The victim's limbs to sever: Stranger, take
The sharp-edg'd steel, and shew that fame reports
Of the Thessalians truth: the Doric blade
Of temper'd metal in his hand he grasp'd,
And from his shoulders threw his graceful robe;
Then to assist him in the toilsome task
Chose Pylades, and bade the slaves retire:
The victim's foot he held, and its white flesh,
His hand extending, bared, and stript the hide
E'er round the course the chariot twice could roll,
And laid the entrails open: in his hands
The fate-presaging parts Ægisthus took
Inspecting: in the entrails was no lobe;
The valves and cells the gall containing shew
Dreadful events to him, that view'd them, near:
Gloomy his visage darken'd: but my lord
Ask'd whence his sadden'd aspect: he replied,
Stranger, some treachery from abroad I fear;
Of mortal men Orestes most I hate,
The son of Agamemnon: to my house
He is a foe. Wilt thou, replied my lord,
King of this state, an exile's treachery dread?
But that, these omens leaving, we may feast,
Give me a Phthian for this Doric blade,
The breast asunder I will cleave: he took
The steel, and cut. Ægisthus, yet intent,
Parted the entrails; and as low he bow'd
His head, thy brother rising to the stroke,
Drove through his back the pond'rous axe, and riv'd
The spinal joints: his heaving body writh'd
And quiver'd struggling in the pangs of death.
The slaves beheld, and instant snatch'd their spears,
Many 'gainst two contesting; but my lord
And Pylades with dauntless courage stood
Oppos'd, and shook their spears: Orestes then
Thus spoke, I come not to this state a foe,

Nor to my servants; but my father's death
 I on his murd'rer have aveng'd; you see
 Th' unfortunate Orestes: kill me not,
 My father's old attendants. At those words
 They all restrain'd their spears; and he was known
 By one grown hoary in the royal house.
 Crowns on thy brother's head they instant plac'd,
 With shouts of joy. He comes, and with him brings
 Proof of his daring, not a Gorgon's head,
 But, whom thou hatest, Ægisthus: blood for blood,
 Bitter requital, on the dead is fall'n.

CHOR. Now for the dance, my friend, thy foot prepare,
 Now with joy-enraptur'd tread,
 Light as the hind that seems to bound in air,
 The sprightly measures lead.
 Thy brother comes, and on his brows
 A crown hath conquest plac'd;
 A wreath so glorious ne'er the victor grac'd
 Where fam'd Alpheüs flows.
 Come then, and with my choral train
 To Conquest raise the joyful strain.

ELEC. O light, and thou resplendent orb of day,
 O earth, and night which I beheld before,
 Now I view freely, freely now I breathe,
 Now that Ægisthus, by whose murd'ring hand
 My father fell, is dead. Whate'er my house
 To grace the head contains, I will bring forth,
 My friends, and crown my brother's conqu'ring brows.

CHOR. Whate'er of ornament thy house contains
 Bring, to grace thy brother's head.
 My choir the dance, accorded to sweet strains
 Dear to the Muse, shall lead.
 For now our kings, whose honour'd hand
 The sceptre justly sway'd,
 Low in the dust th' oppressive tyrant laid,
 Again shall rule the land.
 Rise then, my voice, with cheerful cries,
 Attemper'd to thy triumph rise.

ELECTRA, ORESTES, PYLADES, CHORUS.

- ELEC. O glorious victor, from a father sprung
 Victorious in th' embattled fields of Troy,
 Orestes, for thy brows receive this crown.
 From the vain contest of the length'ned course
 Thou comest not, but victorious o'er thy foe,
 Ægisthus slain, by whom thy father bled,
 And I have been undone. Thou too, brave Youth,
 Train'd by a man most pious, in his toils
 Faithful associate, Pylades, receive
 From me this wreath; for thine an equal share
 Of danger: ever let me hold you blest.
- ORES. First, of this glorious fortune deem the gods,
 Electra, sov'reign rulers; then to me,
 The minister of fortune and the gods,
 Give the due praise. I come not to relate
 That I have slain Ægisthus: deeds shall speak
 For me; a proof to all, his lifeless corse
 I bring thee: treat it as thy soul inclines:
 Cast it by rav'nous beasts to be devour'd,
 Or to the birds, the children of the air,
 Fix it, impaled, a prey: the tyrant now,
 Ægisthus, is thy slave, once call'd thy lord.
- ELEC. Shame checks my tongue: yet something would I speak.
- ORES. What wou'dst thou? Speak: thy fears are vanish'd now.
- ELEC. I fear t' insult the dead, lest censures rise.
- ORES. Not one of all mankind would censure thee.
- ELEC. Hard to be pleas'd our city, prompt to blame.
- ORES. Speak what thou wou'dst, my sister; for to him
 Inexpiable enmity we bear.
- ELEC. Let me then speak: but where shall I begin
 Thy insults to recount? with what conclude?
 Or how pursue the train of my discourse?

991. Mr. Heath with his usual judgment and precision observes, that Electra here does not speak concerning the manner in which the dead body of Ægisthus was to be treated; but with respect to the reproaches which she had formerly wished to utter to his face, and which she was ashamed to utter now he was dead, fearing the censures of the people.

I never with the opening morn forbore
To breathe my silent plaints, which to thy face
I wish'd to utter, from my former fears
If e'er I should be free: I now am free.
Now, to thee living what I wish'd to speak,
I will recount. Thou hast destroy'd my hopes,
Made me an orphan, him and me bereft
Of a dear father, by no wrongs enforc'd.
My mother basely wedding, thou hast slain
The glorious leader of the Grecian arms,
Yet never didst thou tread the fields of Troy.
Nay, such thy folly, thou cou'dst hope to find
My mother, shou'dst thou wed her, nought of ill
To thee intending: hence my father's bed
By thee was foully wrong'd. But let him know,
Who with forbidden love another's wife
Corrupts, then by necessity constrain'd
Receives her as his own, should he expect
To find that chastity preserv'd to him,
Which to her former bed was not preserv'd,
He must be wretched from his frustrate hope.
And what a life of misery didst thou lead,
Though not by thee deem'd ill? Thy conscious mind
Of thy unholy nuptials felt the guilt:
My mother knew that she an impious man
In thee had wedded; and, polluted both,
Thou hadst her fortune, she thy wickedness.
'Mongst all the Argives this had fame divulg'd,
The man obeys the wife, and not the wife
Her husband: shameful this, when in the house
The woman sovereign rules, and not the man.
And when of children speaks the public voice
As from the mother, not the father sprung,
To me it is unpleasing. He who weds
A wife of higher rank and nobler blood,
Sinks into nothing, in her splendor lost.
This truth unknown, thy pride was most deceiv'd,
Thyself as great thou vauntedst, in the pow'r

Of riches vainly elevate: but these
 Are nothing, their enjoyment frail and brief:
 Nature is firm, not riches; she remains
 For ever, and triumphant lifts her head.
 But unjust wealth, which sojourns with the base,
 Glitters for some short space, then flies away.
 To women thy demeanor I shall pass
 Unmention'd, for to speak it ill beseems
 A virgin's tongue; yet I shall make it known
 By indistinct suggestion: Arrogance
 Swell'd thy vain mind, for that the royal house
 Was thine, and beauty grac'd thy perfect form.
 But be not mine an husband, whose fair face
 In softness with a virgin's vies, but one
 Of manly manners; for the sons of such
 By martial toils are train'd to glorious deeds;
 The beauteous only to the dance give grace.
 Perish, thou wretch, to nothing noble form'd:
 Such wast thou found, and vengeance on thy head
 At length hath burst: so perish all, that dare
 Atrocious deeds! Nor deem, though fair his course
 At first, that he hath vanquish'd Justice, e'er
 He shall have reach'd the goal, the end of life.

CHOR. His deeds were dreadful: dreadful hath he felt
 Your vengeance. With great pow'r is Justice arm'd.

ORES. So let it be. But bear this body hence,
 My slaves; to darkness let it be consign'd;
 That when my mother comes, before she feels
 The deadly stroke, she may not see the corse.

ELEC. Forbear: to other subjects turn we now.

ORES. What, from Mycenæ see I aid advance?

ELEC. This is no friendly aid; my mother comes.

ORES. As we could wish, amidst the toils she runs.

ELEC. High on her car in splendid state she comes.

ORES. What shall we do? Our mother shall we kill?

ELEC. On seeing her hath pity seiz'd thy heart?

ORES. She bore me, bred me: her how shall I slay?

ELEC. As she thy noble father slew and mine.

- ORES. O Phœbus, wild and rash the charge thou gav'st.
 ELEC. Who then are sage, if Phœbus be unwise?
 ORES. The charge to kill my mother: impious deed!
 ELEC. What guilt were thine t' avenge thy father's death?
 ORES. Now pure, my mother's murderer I should fly.
 ELEC. Will vengeance for thy father be a crime?
 ORES. But I shall suffer for my mother's blood.
 ELEC. To whom thy father's vengeance then assign?
 ORES. Like to the god perchance some demon spoke.
 ELEC. What, from the sacred tripod! Vain surmise.
 ORES. Ne'er can my reason deem this answer just.
 ELEC. Sink not, unmann'd, to weak and timorous thoughts.
 ORES. For her then shall I spread the fatal net?
 ELEC. In which her husband caught by thee was slain.
 ORES. The house I enter. Dreadful the intent:
 Dreadful shall be my deeds. If such your will,
 Ye heav'nly pow'rs, so let it be; to me
 A bitter, yet a pleasing task assign'd.

CLYTEMNESTRA, ELECTRA, CHORUS.

- CHOR. Imperial mistress of the Argive realms,
 Drawing from Tyndarus thy noble birth,
 And sister to th' illustrious sons of Jove,
 Who 'midst the flaming ether dwell in stars,
 By mortals lab'ring in the ocean waves
 In honour as their great preservers held,
 Hail! equal with the gods I thee revere,
 Thy riches such, and such thy happy state;
 Thy fortune, queen, our veneration claims.
- CLYT. First from the car, ye Trojan dames, alight,
 Then take my hand, that I too may descend
 The temples of the gods with Phrygian spoils
 Are richly grac'd: these, from the land of Troy
 Selected, for the daughter which I lost,
 A small, but honourable prize, are mine.
- ELEC. And may not I, for from my father's house

I am an outcast slave, this wretched hut
My mean abode, thy blest hand, mother, hold ?

CLYT. My slaves are here: labour not thou for me.

ELEC. Why hast thou driven me from the house a slave?
For when the house was taken, I was seiz'd,
As these, an orphan of my father reft.

CLYT. Such were the measures which thy father plann'd,
Where it besem'd him least, against his friends.
For I will speak (though when a woman forms
An ill opinion, from her tongue will flow
Much bitterness) my wrongs from him receiv'd:
These known, if for thy hatred thou hast cause,
'Tis just that thou abhor me; but if not,
Why this abhorrence? Me did Tyndarus
Give to thy father, not that I should die,
Nor my poor children: yet he led away,
Her nuptials with Achilles the pretence,
To Aulis led my daughter, in whose bay
His fleet was station'd; on the altar there
My Iphigenia, like a blooming flow'r,
Did he mow down: averting hostile arms
That threaten'd desolation to the state,
Or for the welfare of his house, to save
His other children, if for many one
A victim he had slain, the deed had found
Forgiveness: but for Helena, because
She was a wanton, and his faithless wife
Her husband could not punish, for this cause
My daughter he destroy'd: yet for these wrongs,
Great as they were, I had not been enrag'd,
Nor had I slain my husband; but he came,
And with him brought the raving prophetess
Admitted to his bed; and thus one house
Contain'd two wives. Women indeed are frail,
Nor other shall I speak; but, this inferr'd,
Whene'er the husband from his honour swerves,
From his connubial bed estrang'd, the wife
Will imitate his manners, and obtain

Some other friend : yet slander 'gainst our sex
Raises her voice aloud ; while those who cause
These trespasses, the men, no blame shall reach.
Had Menelaus in secret from his house
Been borne, ought I Orestes to have slain,
To save my sister's husband ? His son's death
How had thy father brook'd ? And should not he,
Who slew my daughter, die ? Was I to bear
Patient his wrongs ? I slew him ; to that path,
Which only I could tread, I turn'd my foot,
Uniting with his foes ; for of his friends
Against him who with me would lift the sword ?
If, that thy father not with justice died,
Aught thou wou'dst urge against me, freely speak.

ELEC. What thou hast said is just ; yet shame attends
That justice : for the wife, if aught she knows
Of sober sense, should to her husband yield
In all things unreluctant. If thy mind
Dissents, nor to the measure of my speech
Accedes, yet let my mother her last words
Call to her memory : let me freely speak.

CLYT. I now repeat them, nor retract, my child.

ELEC. But, hearing, wilt thou not inflict some ill ?

CLYT. I will not ; but with kindness will requite.

ELEC. Then I will speak, and preface thus my speech.

I wish, my mother, that a better mind
Were thine ; for excellence of form hath brought
To thee and Helena deserved praise.
Nature hath form'd you sisters, light and vain,
Of Castor much unworthy. She was borne
Away, and by her own consent undone :
Thou hast destroy'd the noblest man of Greece,
Thy daughter's death thy pretext, thou hast slain
Thy husband : but so well as I none knows,
Before it was decreed that she should die,
Whilst from Mycenæ his departure yet
Was recent, at the mirror didst thou form
The graceful ringlets of thy golden hair.

The wife, that in her husband's absence seeks
With curious care to set her beauty forth,
Mark as a wanton: she with nicest skill
Would not adorn her person to appear
Abroad, but that she is inclin'd to ill.
Of all the Grecian dames didst thou alone,
I know, rejoice, when prosperous were the arms
Of Troy; but when defeated, on thine eyes
A cloud hung dark; for never didst thou wish
That Agamemnon should from Troy return.
Yet glorious was th' occasion offer'd thee
The strength of female virtue to display:
Thou hadst an husband in no excellence
Inferior to Ægisthus: and so vile
Thy sister's conduct, thou hadst pow'r from thence
The highest honour to thyself to draw;
For in the foulness of th' example vice
Instructive holds a mirror to the good.
But if my father, as thou urgest, kill'd
Thy daughter, how have I to thee done wrong?
My brother how? Or why, when thou hadst slain
Thy husband, didst thou not to us consign
Our father's house, but make it the lewd scene
Of other nuptials purchas'd by that prize?
Nor is thy husband exil'd for thy son;
Nor hath he died for me, though, far beyond
My sister's death, me living hath he slain.
If blood, in righteous retribution, calls
For blood, by me behoves it thou shou'dst bleed,
And by thy son Orestes, to avenge
My father: there if this was just, alike
Is it just here. Unwise is he, who weds,
Allur'd by riches or nobility,
A vicious woman: all that greatness brings
Must yield to that endear'd domestic bliss,
Which on the chaste though humble bed attends.

CHOR. Respecting women fortune ever rules
In nuptials: some a source of joy I see

- CLYT. Always, my daughter, was thy nature form'd
 Fond of thy father: not unusual this:
 Some love the men, and on their mothers some
 With greater warmth their sweet affections place.
 I will forgive thee: nor indeed, my child,
 In deeds done by me do I so rejoice.
 But do I see thee, fresh from child-birth, thus
 Unbath'd, and in these wretched vestments clad?
 Ah my unhappy counsels, that I urg'd
 My husband 'gainst thee to a rage too harsh!
- ELEC. Too late to breathe the sigh, when thou canst give
 No healing medicine. My father dead,
 Why not recal thy outcast wand'ring son?
- CLYT. I fear: my welfare I regard, not his,
 Said to breathe vengeance for his father's death.
- ELEC. Against us why thy husband so enrage?
- CLYT. Such is his nature: and impetuous thine.
- ELEC. My grief is great: but I will check my rage.
- CLYT. And he no longer will be harsh to thee.
- ELEC. High his aspiring; in my house he dwells.
- CLYT. Seest thou what contests thou wou'dst raise anew?
- ELEC. I say no more: I fear him, as I fear——
- CLYT. Cease this discourse. My presence why requir'd?
- ELEC. That I am late a mother thou, I ween,
 Hast heard: make thou the sacrifice for me,
 I have no skill, on the tenth rising morn
 What for my son the rites require; for me,
 This my first child, experience hath not taught.
- CLYT. This is her task, who aided at the birth.
- ELEC. Unaided and alone I bore the child.
- CLYT. So neighbourless, so friendless stands thy house?
- ELEC. None with the poor a friendship wish to form.
- CLYT. Then I will go, and offer to the gods,
 The days accomplish'd, for thy son. This grace
 For thee perform'd, I hasten to the fields,
 Where to the nymphs my husband now presents
 The hallow'd victim. My attendants, drive

These chariots hence, and lead the steeds to stalls;
 When you imagine to the gods these rites
 I shall have paid, again be present here:
 My husband too behoves it me to grace.

ELEC. Let my poor house receive thee; but take heed
 Lest thy rich vests the black'ning smoke defiles.
 There shalt thou sacrifice, as to the gods
 Behoves thee sacrifice: the basket there
 Is for the rites prepar'd, and the keen blade
 Which struck the bull: beside him shalt thou fall
 By a like blow: in Pluto's courts his bride
 He shall receive, with whom in heav'n's fair light
 Thy couch was shar'd: to thee this grace I give;
 Thou vengeance for my father shalt give me.

CHOR. Refluent the waves of mischief swell,
 The forceful whirlwind veers around.
 Then in the bath my monarch fell:

 The roofs, the battlements resound;
 The polish'd stones, that form the walls,
 His voice re-echo, as the hero falls,
 "Why, barb'rous woman, by thy hand,
 "After ten years of war on Phrygia's plain
 "Return'd victorious to my native land,
 "Why, barb'rous woman, am I slain?"

ANTIS. Now Justice, for the injur'd bed
 Which light Love gloried to betray,
 Turns back with vengeance on her head,
 Who dar'd her lord to slay.

Long absent in the fields of fame
 Scarce to the high Cyclopean tow'rs he came,
 Eager to shed his blood she strove;
 With her own hand the keen-edg'd axe she sway'd,
 With her own hand the murd'rous weapon drove,
 And low her hapless husband laid,

EPOD. Hapless to such a pest allied.
 She, like a lioness, in savage pride
 Midst shaggy forests wild that feeds,
 Dar'd such atrocious deeds.

CLYT. Oh by the gods, my children, do not kill [within.
Your mother!

CHOR. Heard you in the house her cry?

CLYT. Ah me, ah me!

CHOR. I too lament thy fate,
Fall'n by thy children's hands. Th' avenging god
Dispenses justice when occasion calls.
Dreadful thy punishment; but dreadful deeds,
Unhappy, 'gainst thy husband didst thou dare.
Stain'd with their mother's recent-streaming blood,
See, from the house they come, terrible proof
Of ruthless slaughter. Ah! there is no house,
Nor hath been, with calamities oppress'd,
More than the wretched race of Tantalus.

ORESTES, PYLADES, ELECTRA, CHORUS.

ORES. O Earth, and thou all-seeing Jove, behold
These bloody, these detested deeds! In death
Stretch'd on the ground beneath my hand they lie,
Both lie, a sad atonement for my wrongs.

ELEC. Much to be mourn'd, my brother, to be mourn'd
With tears, and I the cause. Uncheck'd, unaw'd
I to my mother came, I boldly came
To her that gave me birth. Alas thy fate,
Thy fate, my mother! Thou hast suffer'd ills,
And from thy children, whose remembrance time
Can ne'er efface, deeds ruthless, and far worse
Than ruthless: yet with justice hast thou paid
This debt to vengeance for my father's blood.

ORES. O Phœbus, vengeance from thy hallow'd shrine
Didst thou command, unutterable deeds,
But not obscure, through thee are done, from Greece
The bloody bed remov'd. But to what state
Shall I now go, what hospitable house?
Who will receive me? Who, that fears the gods,
Will look on me, stain'd with my mother's blood?

ELEC. And whither, to what country shall I fly,
Wretch that I am? What nuptials shall be mine?

What husband lead me to the bridal bed?

ORES. Again, again thy sober sense returns,
 Chang'd with the gale: thy thoughts are holy now,
 Then rul'd by frenzy. To what dreadful deeds,
 O thou most dear, hast thou thy brother urg'd
 Reluctant? Didst thou see her, when she drew
 Her vests aside, and bared her breasts, and bow'd
 To earth her body whence I drew my birth,
 Whilst in her locks my furious hand I wreath'd?

ELEC. With anguish'd mind, I know, thou didst proceed,
 When heard thy wailing mother's piteous cries.

ORES. These words, whilst with her hands she strok'd my cheeks,
 Burst forth, Thy pity I implore, my son:
 Soothing she spoke, as on my cheeks she hung,
 That bloodless from my hand the sword might fall.

CHOR. Wretched Electra, how cou'dst thou sustain
 A sight like this? How bear thy mother's death,
 Seeing her thus before thine eyes expire?

ORES. Holding my robe before mine eyes I rais'd
 The sword, and plung'd it in my mother's breast.

ELEC. I urg'd thee too it: I too touch'd the sword.

CHOR. Of deeds most dreadful this, which thou hast done.
 Cover thy mother's body; in her robes
 Decent compose her wounded limbs.—Thou gav'st
 Being to those who were to murder thee.

ELEC. Behold, my friends, and not my friends, we wrap
 Her robes around her, to our house the end
 Of mighty ills.

CHOR. But see, above the house
 What radiant forms appear? or are they gods
 Celestial? Mortals through th' ethereal way
 Walk not: but why to human sight disclos'd?

CASTOR and POLLUX.

Hear, son of Agamemnon: for to thee
 Thy mother's brothers, twin-born sons of Jove,

1358. Electra here addresses herself to the Chorus, and the Trojan dames who had attended Clytemnestra.

Castor, and this my brother Pollux, speak.
 Late having calm'd the ocean waves, that swell'd
 The lab'ring vessel menacing, we came
 To Argos, where our sister we beheld,
 Thy mother, slain: with justice vengeance falls
 On her; in thee unholy is the deed.
 Yet Phœbus, Phœbus—but, my king is he,
 I will be silent: yet, though wise, he gave
 To thee response not wise: but I must praise
 Perforce these things. Thou now must do what Fate
 And Jove decree. To Pylades affy
 Electra; let him lead her to his house
 His bride: but leave thou Argos; for its gates,
 Thy mother slain, to thee is not allow'd
 To enter; for the Furies, hounds of hell,
 Will chase thee, wand'ring, and to madness whirl'd.
 Go then to Athens, seat of Pallas, clasp
 Her hallow'd image: that they touch thee not
 She o'er thy head her Gorgon shield will hold.
 They from her dreadful dragons will start back
 Appall'd. The mount of Mars is there, where first
 On blood the gods sate judges, when enrag'd
 That by unhallow'd nuptials wrong had stain'd
 His daughter, Mars to ruthless vengeance fir'd
 Slew Halirrhothius, of ocean's lord
 The son. Most righteous from that time is held
 The judgment there, and by the gods confirm'd:
 There thou must make appeal, this bloody deed
 Be there decided: from the doom of blood
 Absolv'd the equal numbers of the shells
 Shall save thee that thou die not; for the blame
 Apollo on himself will charge, whose voice
 Ordain'd thy mother's death: in future times
 This law for ever shall be ratified,

1372. Peculiarly his king, as the god of light; though this is a general title frequently given to Apollo; so Homer congratulates Latona for having given birth to two illustrious children, Ἀπόλλωνά τ' ἑκαπτα, καὶ Ἀρτεμιν ἰοχίαιραν. Hymn to Apollo, v. 15.

The votes in equal number shall absolve.
 At this the dreadful goddesses with grief
 Deep-wounded through the yawning earth shall sink
 E'en at the mount; thence an oracular gulf
 Hallow'd, rever'd by mortals. On the banks
 Of Alpheus, the Lycæan temple near,
 'Thou must inhabit an Arcadian state.
 And from thy name the city shall be call'd.
 This I have said to thee; but in the earth
 The citizens of Athens shall entomb
 The body of Ægisthus: the last rites
 Due to thy mother Menelaus shall pay,
 At Nauplia late from vanquish'd Troy arriv'd,
 And Helena: from Egypt, from the house
 Of Proteus she returns: to Ilion's tow'rs
 She went not; but, that strife and bloody war
 'Mongst mortal men might rise, an imag'd form
 Resembling Helena Jove sent to Troy.
 This virgin now let Pylades receive
 His bride, and home to the Achaian land
 Conduct her: him, to thee in words allied,
 To Phocis let him lead, and give him there,
 Just to his modest virtue, ample wealth.
 Thou to the narrow Isthmus bend thy steps,
 Thence speed thee to the blest Cecropian state.
 The fated doom, assign'd for blood, fulfill'd,
 Thou shalt be happy, from thy toils releas'd.

CHOR. O sons of Jove, may we presume t' approach,
 And converse with you be allow'd to hold?

CAST. You may: no curse this blood derives on you.

ORES. May I address you, sons of Tyndarus?

CAST. Thou may'st: to Phœbus this dire deed I charge.

CHOR. Gods as you are, and brothers to the slain,
 Why from the house did not your pow'r avert
 This deadly ill?

CAST. The dire necessity
 Of fate impell'd it, and the voice unwise
 Of Phœbus from his shrine.

- ELEC. But me what voice
Of Phoebus urg'd, what oracle, that I
The murderer of my mother should become?
- CAST. Common the actions, common too the fates.
One Demon, hostile to your parents, rent
The hearts of both.
- ORES. For such a length of time
Not seen, lov'd sister, am I torn so soon
From thy dear converse, leaving thee so soon,
And left?
- CAST. She hath an husband, and an house,
Nor suffers aught severe, save that she leaves
The Argive state.
- ORES. And what severer woe
Can rend the anguish'd heart, than to be driv'n
An outcast from our country? I must leave
My father's house, and for my mother's blood
The sentence pass'd by foreign laws abide.
- CAST. Resume thy courage: to the sacred seat
Of Pallas shalt thou come: be firm, endure.
- ELEC. O my lov'd brother, clasp, O clasp my breast
Close to thy breast; for from our father's house
A mother's curse hath torn us, dreadful curse!
- ORES. Thus let me clasp thee: o'er me, as now dead,
As o'er my tomb thy lamentations pour.
- CAST. Ah, thou hast utter'd sorrows e'en to gods
Mournful to hear. In me, in heav'n's high pow'rs
Is pity for the woes of mortal men.
- ORES. I shall no more behold thee.
- ELEC. And no more
Shall I come near thy sight.
- ORES. No more with thee
Shall I hold converse: this my last address.
- ELEC. Farewell, Mycenæ: and you, Virgins, born
In the same state with me, farewell, farewell!
- ORES. O thou most faithful, dost thou go e'en now?
- ELEC. I go: but dew my soften'd eyes with tears.
- ORES. Go, Pylades, go thou with joy, and wed

Electra.

CAST.

Them the nuptial rites await.

Haste thou to Athens, fly these hounds of hell :
For 'gainst thee they their hideous steps advance,
Gloomy and dark, their hands with serpents arm'd,
Rejoicing in the dreadful pains they give.
To the Sicilian sea with speed we go,
To save the vessels lab'ring in the waves.
But to the impious through th' ethereal tract
We no assistance bring: but those, to whom
Justice and sanctity of life is dear,
We from their dang'rous toils relieve, and save.
Let no one then unjustly will to act,
Nor in one vessel with the perjurd sail :
A god to mortals this monition gives.

CHOR.

Oh be you blest ! And those, to whom is giv'n
Calmly the course of mortal life to pass
By no affliction sunk, pronounce we blest.



O R E S T E S.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

ELECTRA

HELENA

ORESTES

MENELAUS

TYNDARUS

PYLADES

MESSENGER

PHRYGIAN SLAVE

CHORUS of ARGIVE VIRGINS.

O R E S T E S.

TO the *Choephoræ* of *Æschylus* we owe the *Electra* and *Orestes* of *Euripides*, and particularly that wonderful scene in which the madness of *Orestes* is represented: this was touched with a masterly hand by the great father of tragedy; but *Euripides*, as hath been observed before, had the skill to give this sketch its finishing, and to heighten it with the warmest glow of colouring; our poet is here, as *Longinus* describes him, like a lion that at first disregards his assailants, but, as soon as he feels the spear, lashes himself up to rage, and rushes on with impetuous ardour: if his genius did not of itself carry him to the sublime, he has here forced his nature to the true tragic elevation: here, as the critic finely observes, the poet himself saw the *Furies*: and what his imagination so finely conceived, he forced his audience almost to see. *Euripides*, indeed, particularly studied to enrich his tragedies with these two passions, Love and Madness; and he succeeded very happily in them. *Shakespeare* knew well how to paint the horrors of an imagination disturbed with the consciousness of guilt, and all that perilous stuff which weighs upon the heart, when *Macbeth* felt

His secret murders sticking on his hands:

but the frenzy of Orestes receives a peculiar heightening from the tenderness with which the scene opens and concludes ; we have here all the sublime conception and noble daring of Æschylus united with that sympathetic softness which characterises Euripides.

As we form our first acquaintance with these Grecian princes from Homer, and imbibe an early veneration for their noble qualities embellished by the graces of his poetry, we are hurt at finding the gallant Menelaus, the intrepid hero, the affectionate brother, represented as an ungrateful, unfeeling, timid, designing poltroon. Aristotle (Poet. c. 15.) is generally understood as censuring the poet for this unnecessary depravation of the hero's manners ; but the words of the critic are so concise, and derive so little light from the connection, that they may be considered as a mysterious oracular sentence which wants an expounder ; perhaps it excuses the poet upon the necessity ; and indeed it is not easy to conceive how the drama, had it given to Menelaus other manners, could have been worked up to this terrible height of tragic distress.

But a stronger and more important censure must ever fall on the sanguinary spirit of revenge which breathes through this drama. Even Tyndarus, who professes the highest reverence for the laws, and declares his resolution to support them, urges the death of Orestes and Electra, though he acknowledges that the wisdom of their ancestors allowed the offenders to atone their guilt by banishment : thus his argument confutes itself, and he is a fine image of a person who deceives even himself with the pretext of justice, by viewing things through the false medium of passion. The cool and dispassionate Pylades proposes to kill Helena, because her death would afflict the heart of Menelaus

with grief: Orestes readily engages in the horrid design: the Chorus, the faithful guardian of virtue, approves it: and Electra, far from expressing any abhorrence of this cruel murder, advises her brother to seize Hermione, and, should Menelaus refuse to save their lives, to plunge the sword into her breast. We may be assured that these sentiments were received with approbation, because the tender Virgil, whose heart was alive to all the feelings of humanity, hath adopted them, and given them to his pious Æneas;

Extinxisse tamen nefas, et sumpsisse merentis
Laudabor pœnas; animumque explesse juvabit
Ultricis flammæ, et cineres satiasset meorum.

Æneid. ii. 585.

But it should be remembered, that this savage and sanguinary spirit does not characterize Orestes or Æneas: it was general in those ages, when not to revenge an injury was considered as a mark of a base and servile mind: their morality allowed, and their religion sanctified, such revenge. If our minds are more enlightened, and our manners more humanized, we know from whence we derive the advantage.

The scene is in the royal palace at Argos.



O R E S T E S.

ELEC. **T**HERE is not in the stores of angry heav'n
 Aught terrible, affliction or distress,
 But miserable man bears its full weight.
 E'en Tantalus, the son of Jove, the blest,
 (Not to malign his fate,) hangs in the air,
 And trembles at the rock, which o'er his head

6. The poets in general have assigned a different punishment to Tantalus, who is exhibited by them as an "ensample of mind intemperate" in the desire of riches,

Tantalus a libris sitiens fugientia cap'tat
 Flumina. *Hor. Sat. 1.*

When to the water he his lip applies,
 Back from his lip the treach'rous water flies.
 Above, beneath, around his hapless head
 Trees of all kinds delicious fruitage spread.—
 The fruit he strives to seize: but blasts arise,
 Toss it on high, and whirl it to the skies.

Odys. xi. v. 723. Broome.

See also Spenser's *Fairy Queen*, book ii. cant. vii. 58. To these torments Pausanias has added the dread of the impending rock, ἐπὶ δὲ αὐτοῖς προσίστην οἱ καὶ εὐδὲ τοῦ ἐσηρημένου λίθου δῦμα. Phocic. Pindar's account of Tantalus, *Olymp. Ode i.* is much like this of Euripides. The learned Mr. Bryant in his *Analysis*, vol. i. p. 293, gives a very ingenious solution of this fable: "Tantalus was a "priest, who out of goodnature divulged the mysteries of the gods to the un-"initiated," (in the language of Pindar and Poetry he privately bore to mortals the immortal-making nectar and ambrosia of the gods,) "and therefore was "ejected from the sacred college. *Scholia on Lycophron.* He is termed by Euripides "ἀκέλαστος τὴν γλῶσσαν, The mysteries, which he revealed, were those of Osiris, "the Sun, the Petor and Petora of Egypt, whose vengeance he ever after feared "would overwhelm him. This deity was by the later Greeks expressed Petros "and Petra. Hence the above fable." This explanation is corroborated by the

Projects its threat'ning mass; a punishment
 They say, for that to heav'n's high feast admitted,
 A mortal equal with th' immortals grac'd,
 He curb'd not the intemperance of his tongue:
 The sire of Pelops he, of Atreus this,
 For whom the Fates weaving a diadem
 Wove discord with the thread, to kindle war
 Betwixt the brothers, Atreus and Thyestes.
 But why recite things horrible to tell?
 Him Atreus feasted, having slain his sons.
 From Atreus (may oblivion hide the rest)
 Th' illustrious Agamemnon, if illustrious,
 And Menelaus had birth; Aërope
 Of Crete their mother. Menelaus espous'd
 The fatal Helen, by the gods abhorr'd.
 Th' imperial Agamemnon woo'd the bed
 Of Clytemnestra, memorable to Greece:
 From her three daughters sprung, Chrysothemis,
 And Iphigenia, and myself Electra,
 One son, Orestes, from this wicked mother,
 Who in th' inextricable robe entangled
 Her husband murder'd, for a cause which ill
 Becomes a virgin's modest lips t' unfold.
 Th' injustice of Apollo must I blame?
 Orestes he commands to slay his mother,
 Nor bears to all the glory of the deed.
 Not disobedient to the god he slew her.
 I had my share, such as a woman might,
 And Pylades assisted in the act.
 Since then the poor Orestes pines away
 Impair'd with cruel sickness; on his bed

following observation, "The first statues erected for the gods hardly deserved the
 " name, being only great stones set an end, generally square, sometimes conical,
 " sometimes pyramidal or semicircular, and frequently quite rough and unhewn,
 " without touch of a tool. The ancient Phœnicians had an image of the Sun,
 " which they believed not to have been formed by human art, but to have fallen
 " immediately down from heaven. It was a large black stone, round and broad at
 " the bottom, but diminishing by degrees, and terminating in a slender point."

Letters on Mythology, p. 373.

He lies ; his mother's blood to phrenzy whirls
His tortur'd sense : th' avenging pow'rs, that haunt
His soul with terrors thus, I dare not name.
The sixth day this, since on the hallow'd pile
My slaughter'd mother purg'd her stains away.
No food hath pass'd his lips, no bath refresh'd
His limbs ; but in his garments cover'd close,
When his severe disease abates a little,
He melts in tears ; and sometimes from his couch
Starts furious, like a colt burst from his yoke.
Mean time the state of Argos hath decreed
That shelt'ring roof, and fire, and conference
Be interdicted to us matricides.
And this decisive day the states pronounce
Our doom, to die crush'd with o'erwhelming stones,
Or by th' avenging sword plung'd in our breasts.
Yet have we one small ray of bright'ning hope,
Hope that we die not ; for from Troy return'd
After long wand'r'ings Menelaus arrives,
His vessels in the Nauplian harbour moor'd,
And to this strand impels his eager oar :
But the woe-working Helen in the shades
Of shelt'ring night, lest some, whose sons were slain
Beneath the walls of Troy, seeing her walk
In day's fair light, with vengeful rage might rise,
And crush the shining mischief, first he lands,
And sends her to our house : there now she is,
Weeping her sister's fate, and our afflictions.
Yet 'midst her grief this comfort she enjoys,
Hermione, her virgin daughter, whom
At Sparta, when she sail'd for Troy, she left,
The father to my mother's care consign'd,
In her delighted she forgets her woes.
But my quick eye glances to each access,
If Menelaus advancing I might see.
Weak help from others, if not sav'd by him :
The house of the unhappy hath no friend.

ELECTRA, HELENA.

- HEL. Daughter of Clytemnestra and the chief
That drew from Atreus his illustrious birth,
Virgin of ripest years, how is it, say,
With thee, unhappy, and the wretch Orestes,
Who in his mother's blood imbrued his hands?
With thee conversing I am not polluted,
Charging the crime on Phœbus. Yet I mourn
My sister's fate; for since I sail'd to Troy,
Urg'd to that madness by th' offended gods,
These eyes have not beheld her; yet, her loss
Deploring, at her fortunes drop the tear.
- ELEC. Why should I tell thee, what thine eyes behold,
The race of Agamemnon in distress?
Myself attendant on th' unhappy dead,
But that he breathes a little he is dead,
Sit sleepless: yet reproach I not his ills.
But thou art happy, happy is thy husband;
To us in our calamities ye come.
- HEL. How long on this sick bed hath he been laid?
- ELEC. E'er since he shed her blood, who gave him breath.
- HEL. Ah wretch! Ah wretched mother thus to perish!
- ELEC. Such our lost state I sink beneath our ills.
- HEL. Do me one grace I beg thee by the gods.
- ELEC. As watching at my brother's couch I may.
- HEL. Wilt thou go for me to my sister's tomb?
- ELEC. My mother's dost thou mean? And wherefore go?
- HEL. These locks and my libations to present.
- ELEC. What hinders but thou visit thy friend's tomb?
- HEL. And shew me to the Grecians? Shame forbids.
- ELEC. Too late discreet; when shameless from thy house——
- HEL. Just is thy censure, but not friendly to me.
- ELEC. And at Mycenæ dost thou feel this shame?
- HEL. I dread the fathers, whose sons died at Troy.
- ELEC. Against thee loud the voice of Argos cries.

77. This is an indirect reproach; so is the repeated appellation of Virgin.

HEL. Oblige me then, and free me from this fear.

ELEC. I could not look upon my mother's tomb.

HEL. To send these offerings by a slave were shame.

ELEC. Hermione, thy daughter, why not send?

HEL. A virgin 'midst the crowd! Indecent this.

ELEC. The favours of the dead, who train'd her youth
With fond affection, thus she might repay.

HEL. 'Tis justly urg'd: I will obey thee, virgin,
And send my daughter; for thy words are wise.
Hermione, come hither: to the tomb
Of Clytemnestra these libations bear,
And these my locks; there pour this honied bowl
Foaming with milk and wine; on the high mound,
Addressing thus the dead, "These hallow'd gifts
"Helen, thy sister, offers, who through fear
"Approaches not thy tomb, dreading the crowd
"Of Argos." Bid her be propitious to us,
To me, to thee, my husband, and these two,
These wretched two, whom Phœbus hath undone.
Then promise all, that to a sister's shade
A sister should bestow: go, my child, haste,
Present these gifts; then speed thy quick return.

ELEC. O Nature, in the bad how great an ill! [alone.
But in the virtuous strong thy pow'r to save.
See, she hath shorn th' extremity of her locks,
Anxious of beauty, the same woman still!
May the gods hate thee, as thou' hast ruin'd me,
And him, and universal Greece!—Ah me,
My lov'd companions come, whose friendly grief
Attunes their sad notes to my mournful strains.
He sleeps now; they will wake him, and my eyes
Will melt in tears, when I behold him rave.

ELECTRA, CHORUS.

ELEC. Dearest of women, softly set your feet,
Not to be heard; gently advance; no noise.
Kind is your friendship: but t' awake him now
From this sweet rest would be a grief to me.

- CHOR. Silence, silence: softly tread:
Nor foot be heard, nor sound, nor noise.
- ELEC. This way far, far from the bed.
- CHOR. I obey.
- ELEC. Hush, let thy voice
Steal on my ear
Soft as the whispers of the breathing reed.
- CHOR. Soft as the whispers of the breathing reed
My voice shall steal upon thy ear.
- ELEC. Ay, thus, low, low; softly come near;
Come softly, friends, and tell me why
This visit. A long sleep hath clos'd his eye.
- CHOR. Doth hope then brighten on his ill?
- ELEC. Alas, what hope? Behold him lie;
He breathes, a little breathes, and still
Heaves at short intervals a sigh.
- CHOR. Unhappy state!
- ELEC. Death were it, should you, as thus loud you weep,
Fright from his eye-lids the sweet joys of sleep.
- CHOR. Yet wail I his unhappy state,
Abhorred deeds of deadly hate,
Rage of vindictive, tort'ring woes,
Which the relentless pow'rs of heav'n impose.
- ELEC. Unjust, unjust the stern command,
The stern command Apollo gave
From Themis' seat, his ruthless hand
In blood, in mother's blood to lave.
- CHOR. Ah, turn thine eye,
He stirs, he moves, roll'd in the cov'ring vest.
- ELEC. Wretch, thy rude clamours have disturb'd his rest.
- CHOR. And yet I think sleep locks his eye.
- ELEC. Wilt thou be gone? hence wilt thou fly,
That Quiet here again may dwell?
- CHOR. Again compos'd he sleeps again.
- ELEC. 'Tis well.
- CHOR. Awful queen, whose gentle pow'r
Brings sweet oblivion of our woes,
And in the calm and silent hour

Distils the blessings of repose,
 Come awful Night,
 Come from the gloom of Erebus profound,
 And spread thy sable-tinctur'd wings around;
 Speed to this royal house thy flight:
 For pale-eyed Grief, and wild Affright
 And all the horrors of Despair,
 Here pour their rage, and threaten ruin here.

ELEC.

Softly let your warblings flow;
 Further, a further distance keep:
 The far off cadence sweet and low
 Charms his repose, and aids his sleep.

CHOR.

Tell us, what end
 Awaits his mis'ries?

ELEC.

Death: that end I fear.
 He tastes no food.

CHOR.

Death then indeed, and near.

ELEC.

When Phœbus gave the dire command
 To bathe in mother's blood his hand,
 By whom the father sunk in dust,
 He doom'd us victims.

CHOR.

Dire these deeds, but just.

ELEC.

She slew, she died.—Thy hand abhorr'd
 In dust my bleeding father laid:
 And for thy blood, in vengeance pour'd,
 We perish, perish as the dead.
 The shadowy train
 Thou joinest: but my life shall waste away
 In tears the night, in sighs and groans the day.
 But, ah! to whom shall I complain?
 Nor child nor husband sooths my pain:
 For ever drag I my distress,
 Sigh, mourn, and weep in lonely wretchedness.

CHOR.

Go nearer, royal virgin; nearer view him,
 That under this soft sleep the sleep of death
 Deceive thee not: I like not this still rest.

ORESTES, ELECTRA, CHORUS.

- ORES. O gentle Sleep, whose lenient pow'r thus sooths
Disease and pain, how sweet thy visit to me,
Who wanted thy soft aid ! Blessing divine,
That to the wretched givest wish'd repose,
Steeping their senses in forgetfulness !——
Where have I been ? Where am I ? How brought hither ?
My late distraction blots remembrance out.
- ELEC. My most dear brother, oh what heart-felt joy
To see thee lie compos'd in gentle sleep !
Wilt thou I touch thee ? Shall I raise thee up ?
- ORES. Assist me then, assist me ; from my mouth
Wipe off this clotted foam ; wipe my moist eyes.
- ELEC. Delightful office, for a sister's hand
To minister relief to a sick brother.
- ORES. Lie by my side, and from my face remove
These squalid locks ; they blind my darken'd eyes.
- ELEC. How tangled are the ringlets of thy hair,
Wild and disorder'd through this long neglect !
- ORES. Pray lay me down again : when this ill frenzy
Leaves me, I am very feeble, very faint.
- ELEC. There, there : the bed is grateful to the sick,
A mournful, but a necessary tenure.
- ORES. Raise me again ; more upright ; bend me forward.
- CHOR. The sick are wayward through their restlessness.
- ELEC. Or wilt thou try with slow steps on the ground
To fix thy feet ? Variety is sweet.
- ORES. Most willingly : it hath the shew of health ;
The seeming hath some good, though void of truth.
- ELEC. Now, my lov'd brother, hear me, whilst the Furies
Permit thy sense thus clear and undisturb'd.
- ORES. Hast thou aught new ? If good, I thank thee for it ;
If ill, I have enough of ill already.
- ELEC. Thy father's brother, Menelaus, arrives ;
His fleet rides anchor'd in the Nauplian bay.
- ORES. Comes he then ? Light on our afflictions dawns :
Much to my father's kindness doth he owe.
- ELEC. He comes ; and, to confirm what now I say,

Brings Helena from Ilium's ruin'd walls.

ORES. More to be envied, were he sav'd alone:
Bringing his wife, he brings a mighty ill.

ELEC. The female line of Tyndarus was born
To deep disgrace, and infamous through Greece.

ORES. Be thou unlike them then: 'tis in thy pow'r:
And further than in words thy virtue prove.

ELEC. Alas, my brother, wildly rolls thine eye:
So quickly chang'd! the frenetic fit returns.

ORES. Ah, mother! Do not set thy Furies on me.
See, how their fiery eye-balls glare in blood,
And wreathing snakes hiss in their horrid hair!
There, there they stand, ready to leap upon me.

ELEC. Rest thee, poor brother, rest thee on thy bed:
Thou seest them not: 'tis fancy's coinage all.

ORES. O Phœbus, they will kill me, these dire forms,
These gorgon-visag'd ministers of hell!

ELEC. Thus will I hold thee, round thee throw mine arms,
And check th' unhappy force of thy wild starts.

ORES. Off, let me go: I know thee, who thou art,
One of the Furies; and thou grapplest with me,
To whirl me into Tartarus. Avaunt!

ELEC. What shall I do? Ah me, where shall I seek
Assistance, since th' unfriendly god frowns on us!

ORES. Bring me the bow of horn which Phœbus gave me,
And with it bade me drive these fiends away,
Should they affright me with their madd'ning terrors.

ELEC. Shall any god by mortal hands be wounded?

ORES. Should she not instant vanish from my sight.
Heard you the clang? Saw you the winged shaft
Bound from the distant-wounding bow? Ha, ha,
Here yet! On swift wings mount th' ethereal air,
And there impeach the oracle of Phœbus.—
Whence this disquiet? Why thus pants my breath?
Ah, whither am I wander'd from my bed?
For from the storm the high-swoln waves subside.
Why dost thou weep, my sister? Why decline
Thy drooping head, and hide it in thy vest?

I blush to give thee part in my disease,
 And wound with grief thy virgin tenderness.
 Let not my ills be thus infectious to thee :
 Thou barely didst assent ; I did thee deed,
 I shed her blood. But Phœbus I must blame,
 Who urg'd me to this most unholy act ;
 Then, save with soothing words, assist me not.
 Had these eyes seen my father, had I ask'd him
 In duty if I ought to slay my mother,
 I think he would have pray'd me not to plunge
 My murdering sword in her that gave me birth ;
 Since he could not revisit heav'n's sweet light,
 And I must suffer all these miseries.
 But now unveil thy face and dry thy tears,
 My sister, though afflictions press us sore :
 And when thou seest me in these fitful moods,
 Sooth my disorder'd sense, and let thy voice
 Speak peace to my distraction : when the sigh
 Swells in thy bosom, 'tis a brother's part
 With tender sympathy to calm thy griefs :
 These are the pleasing offices of friends.
 But to thy chamber go, afflicted maid,
 There seek repose, close thy long-sleepless eyes,
 With food refresh thee, and th' enlivening bath.
 Shou'dst thou forsake me, or with too close tendance
 Impair thy delicate and tender health,
 Then were I lost indeed ; for thou alone,
 Abandon'd as I am, art all my comfort.

ELEC. Should I forsake thee ! No : my choice is fix'd ;
 And I will die with thee, or with thee live,
 Indifferent for myself ; for shou'dst thou die,
 What refuge shall a lonely virgin find,
 Her brother lost, her father lost, her friends
 All melted from her ?——Yet, if such thy wish,
 I ought t' obey : recline thee on thy couch,
 Nor let these visionary terrors fright thee ;
 There rest : though all be fancy's coinage wild,
 Yet Nature sinks beneath the violent toil.

CHORUS.

STRO. Awful pow'rs, whose rapid flight
 Bears you from the realms of night
 To hearts that groan, and eyes that weep,
 Where you joyless orgies keep,
 Ye gloomy pow'rs, that shake the affrighted air,
 And arm'd with your tremendous rod,
 Dealing terror, woe, despair,
 Punish murder, punish blood,
 For Agamemnon's race this strain,
 This supplicating strain, I pour;
 No more afflict his soul with pain,
 Nor torture him with madness more :
 Breathe oblivion o'er his woes,
 Leave him, leave him to repose.

 Unhappy Youth, what toils are thine,
 Since Phœbus from his central shrine
 Bade thee unsheath th' avenging sword,
 And Fate confirm'd th' irrevocable word !
 ANTIS. Hear us, king of gods, oh hear,
 Where is soft-eyed Pity, where ?
 Whence, to plunge thee thus in woes,
 Discord stain'd with gore arose ?
 What vengeful Demon thus with footstep dread
 Trampling the blood-polluted ground
 Sternly cruel joys to spread
 Horror, rage, and madness round ?
 Woe, woe is me ! in man's frail state
 Nor height nor greatness firm abides :
 On the calm sea secure of fate,
 Her sails all spread, the vessel rides :
 Now th' impetuous whirlwinds sweep,
 Roars the storm, and swells the deep,
 Till with the furious tempest tost
 She sinks in surging billows lost.
 Yet firm their fate will I embrace,
 And still revere this heav'n-descended race.

CHOR. But see, the royal Menelaus advances :

That awe-commanding and majestic port
 Denotes him of the race of Tantalus.—
 Illustrious leader of a thousand ships,
 That bore to Asia's strand thy martial host,
 All hail ! Good fortune guides thee, and the gods,
 Fav'ring thy vows, have bless'd thy conqu'ring arms.

MENELAUS, ORESTES, CHORUS.

- MEN. From Troy return'd, with pleasure I behold
 This royal house, with pleasure mix'd with grief:
 For never saw I house encompass'd round
 With such afflictions. Agamemnon's fate,
 How by his wife he perish'd, I long since
 At Malea learn'd, when rising from the waves
 Confess'd to open view the sailors' prophet,
 Unerring Glaucus, the dire bath disclos'd,
 The wife, and each sad circumstance of blood;
 A tale, that harrow'd up my soul with grief,
 And wrung the tear from the stern veteran's eye.
 But to the Nauplian coast arriv'd, my wife
 First landed, when I hop'd with joy to fold
 Orestes and his mother in my arms,
 As happy now, a wave-wash'd fisherman.
 Told me that Clytemnestra is no more,
 Slain by th' unholy sword. But, virgins, say
 Where is Orestes, who these horrid ills
 Hath dar'd ? for when the war call'd me to Troy,
 An infant in his mother's arms I left him,
 That now, if seen, his form would be unknown.
- ORES. He whom thou seek'st am I : I am Orestes.
 To thee, O king, will I unfold my woes,
 And willingly : but first I grasp thy knees,
 And pour my plain unornamented pray'r:
 Save me ; for thou 'midst my distress art come.
- MEN. Ye pow'rs of heav'n, what do mine eyes behold,
 One from the regions of the dead return'd !
- ORES. Well hast thou said : I view the light indeed,
 But do not live ; such are my miseries.

- MEN. How wild, how horrid hangs thy matted hair !
ORES. The real, not th' apparent, racks my soul.
MEN. Thy shrunk and hollow eye glares dreadfully.
ORES. My whole frame wastes ; nought, save my name, is left.
MEN. Reason revolts at this thy squalid form.
ORES. Alas, I am the murderer of my mother.
MEN. I have heard it : spare mine ear the tale of woe.
ORES. I will : yet heav'n is rich in woes to me.
MEN. What are thy suff'rings ? What disease consumes thee ?
ORES. Conscience : the conscious guilt of horrid deeds.
MEN. How say'st thou ? Wisdom suffers when obscure.
ORES. A pining melancholy most consumes me.
MEN. Dreadful its pow'r, but not immedicable.
ORES. And frenzy, fierce t' avenge my mother's blood.
MEN. When did its rage first seize thee ? What the day ?
ORES. The day I rais'd my hapless mother's tomb.
MEN. What, in the house, or sitting at the pyre ?
ORES. By night, as from rude hands I guard her bones.
MEN. Was any present, to support thy weakness ?
ORES. My Pylades, who aided in her death.
MEN. What phantoms frighten thy disorder'd sense ?
ORES. Three virgin forms I see gloomy as night.
MEN. Whom thy words mark I know, but will not name.
ORES. Awful they are : forbear irreverent words.
MEN. And do these haunt thee for thy mother's blood ?
ORES. Ah wretched me, how dreadful their pursuit !
MEN. Thus dreadful sufferings dreadful deeds attend.
ORES. Yet have we where to charge our miseries.
MEN. Name not thy father's death ; that were unwise.
ORES. Phœbus ; by whose command I slew my mother.
MEN. Of right and justice ignorant, I ween.
ORES. We to the gods submit, whate'er they are.
MEN. And doth not Phœbus in thine ills protect thee ?
ORES. Not yet : delays attend the pow'rs divine.
MEN. How long then since thy mother breath'd her last ?
ORES. This the sixth day ; the funeral pile yet warm.
MEN. How soon thy mother's blood these pow'rs avenge ?
ORES. Unwisely said : though true, unkind to friends.

- MEN. What then avails to have aveng'd thy father?
 ORES. Nought yet. Delay is as a deed not done.
 MEN. In what light doth the city view thy deeds?
 ORES. They hate us, so that none hold conference with us.
 MEN. Hast thou yet purified thy hands from blood?
 ORES. Where'er I go, each house is barr'd against me.
 MEN. What citizens thus drive thee from the land?
 ORES. Œax, through ranc'rous malice to my father.
 MEN. On the avenging Palamedes' death?
 ORES. I wrought it not. But three pursue my ruin.
 MEN. The others who? Some of Ægisthus' friends?
 ORES. They hurt me most, whose pow'r now sways the state.
 MEN. Commit they not the sceptre to thy hands?
 ORES. They, who no longer suffer us to live!
 MEN. How acting? What thou art assured of, speak.
 ORES. Sentence against us will this day be giv'n.
 MEN. Of exile? or to die? or not to die?
 ORES. To die, with stones crush'd by our citizens.
 MEN. Why fliest thou not far from this country's bounds?
 ORES. On every side we are inclos'd with arms.
 MEN. By private foes, or by the Argive state?
 ORES. By the whole state: in brief, that I may die.
 MEN. Wretch, thou hast reach'd misfortune's dire extreme.
 ORES. In thee is all my hope, in thee my refuge:
 Happy to us afflicted art thou come;
 Share with thy friends that happiness, alone
 Enjoy not all the good thou hast receiv'd;
 In our afflictions bear a friendly part.
 Think how my father lov'd thee, and requite
 That love to us: it will become thee well:
 They have the name of friends, but not the worth,
 Who are not friends in our calamities.
- CHOR. But see, the Spartan Tyndarus this way
 Directs his aged feet, in sable weeds,
 His locks, in grief for his dead daughter, shorn.
- ORES. Ah me! He comes indeed, whose presence most

Fills me with shame for what I have misdome.
 I was his darling once; my infant age
 With tenderness he nurs'd, caress'd me, bore
 The child of Agamemnon in his arms,
 And lov'd me like the twin-born sons of Jove:
 Nor Leda less. And is it thus, my soul,
 Thus, O my bleeding heart, that I requite
 Their ill-paid love! Ah, cover me, ye shades,
 Ye clouds, with friendly darkness wrap me round,
 And hide me from the terrors of his eye!

TYNDARUS, MENELAUS, ORESTES, CHORUS.

TYND. Where shall I see my daughter's husband, where
 Find Menelaus? At Clytemnestra's tomb
 Libations as I pour'd, I heard that he,
 With Helen, after all these tedious years,
 Is safely in the Nauplian port arriv'd.
 O lead me; for I long to grasp his hand,
 To feast mine eyes after this length of years,
 And welcome to our shores the man I love.

MEN. Hail, reverend sharer of the bed with Jove!

TYND. With joy thy greeting I return, my son.
 Ah, not to know the future, what an ill!
 Hateful to me this murd'rous dragon here
 Glares pestilential lightnings from his eyes.
 Wilt thou hold conference with th' unhallow'd wretch?

MEN. And wherefore not? His father was my friend.

TYND. From such a father sprung a son so vile?

MEN. He did; to be respected, though unhappy.

TYND. Barb'rous thy manners, 'mongst barbarians learn'd.

MEN. Nay, Greece enjoins respect to kindred blood.

TYND. And not to wish to be above the laws.

MEN. Necessity is to the wise a law.

TYND. Enjoy it thou; I will have none of it.

MEN. Wisdom approves not anger in thy years.

TYND. What! Is the contest then of wisdom with him?
 If virtuous and dishonourable deeds
 Are plain to all, who more unwise than he?

Deaf to the call of justice he infring'd
The firm authority of the public laws:
For when beneath my daughter's murd'ring axe
Th' imperial Agamemnon bow'd his head,
An horrid deed, which never shall I praise,
He ought t' have called the laws, the righteous laws,
T' avenge the blood, and by appeal to them
Have driv'n his mother from this royal house:
Thus 'midst his ills calm reason had borne rule,
Justice had held its course, and he been righteous.
But the same Fury, which had seiz'd his mother,
Had now seiz'd him; and with ungovern'd rage,
Justly abhorrent of her impious deed,
He did a deed more impious, slew his mother.
For, let me ask thee, should the faithless wife
Bathe in the husband's blood her murderous hands,
And should th' avenging son the mother slay,
His son again retaliate blood for blood,
What bound shall the progressive mischief know?
The wisdom of our ancestors ordain'd
That he, who had the guilt of blood upon him,
Be not allow'd the sight, the walks of men,
By banishment atoning, not by death:
Else one must always be to death devote,
Who hath the last pollution on his hands.
But these vile women doth my soul abhor,
And her, my daughter, first, who slew her lord:
Thy Helen too I never will commend,
Never hold converse with her; no; nor thee
Can I approve, who for a worthless woman
In toilsome march hast trod the fields of Troy.
Yet to my pow'r will I support the laws,
And check this savage, blood-polluted rage,
Which spreads wild havoc o'er th' unpeopled land.
Hadst thou the feelings of humanity,
Wretch, when thy mother cried to thee for mercy,
And bared her breast to thy relentless view?
I saw it not, that scene of misery,

Yet the soft tear melts from my aged eye.
 One thing confirms my words, the gods abhor,
 With madness scourge thee, and with terrors haunt,
 Vindictive of thy guilt. What need I hear
 From other witness what mine eyes behold?
 Now, Menelaus, I warn thee, mark me well,
 Do not, protecting him, oppose the gods,
 But leave him to the vengeance of the state,
 Or never set thy foot on Sparta's shore.
 My daughter by her death hath rightly paid
 The debt to justice: but from him that death
 Was most unjust. Oh, happy had I been,
 Had I no daughters: there I am a wretch!

CHOR. Happy his state, who, in his children blest,
 Hath not there felt affliction's deepest wound.

ORES. In reverence to thy age I dread to speak
 What I well know must pierce thy heart with grief.
 I am unholy in my mother's death,
 But holy, as my father I aveng'd.
 The veneration due to those grey hairs
 Strikes me with awe: else I could urge my plea
 Freely and boldly: but thy years dismay me.
 What could I do? Let fact be weigh'd with fact.
 My father was the author of my being;
 Thy daughter brought me forth: he gave me life,
 Which she but foster'd: to the higher cause

571. Æschylus has urged the same argument in the *Furies*, p. 429. the philosophy, such as it is, was borrowed from the Egyptians, who were compelled to bring up all their children; for they wisely thought that an increase of people contributed in the highest degree to the happiness of their country. They esteemed none of their children spurious, though born to them of their female slaves; for they supposed the father alone to be the author of the child's existence, and that the mother only gives it a place and nourishment, τροφήν καὶ χάραν παράχυσθαι; and those trees, which bear fruit, they called male; those, which bear no fruit, female; quite contrary to the Grecians. Diodor. Sicul. l. i. It is curious to observe the different purposes to which this reasoning has been applied: in Egypt it wisely and humanely intended the preservation of infants, and the population of the country; the dramatic poets of Greece urged it in justification of a son, who had murdered his mother; and our understandings have lately been insulted with this wretched sophistry revived in favour of polygamy.

An higher reverence then I deem'd was due.
Thy daughter, for I dare not call her mother,
Forsook her royal bed for a rank sty
Of secret and adulterous lust: on me
The word reflects disgrace, yet I must speak it.
Ægisthus was this private paramour:
Him first I slew, then sacrific'd my mother;
An impious deed; but I aveng'd my father.
Thou threaten'st the just vengeance of the state:
Hear me: deserve I not the thanks of Greece?
Should wives with ruffian boldness kill their husbands,
Then fly for refuge to their sons, and think,
Baring their breast to captivate their pity,
These deeds would pass for nothing, as the mood,
For something or for nothing, shall incline them.
This complot have I broke, by doing what
Thy pompous language styles atrocious deeds.
My soul abhorr'd my mother, and I slew her,
Who, when her lord was absent, and in arms
To glorious conquest led the sons of Greece,
Betray'd him, with pollution stain'd his bed;
And, conscious of her guilt, sought not t' atone it,
But, to escape his righteous vengeance, pour'd
Destruction on his head, and kill'd my father.
Now by the gods, though in a charge of blood
Ill it becomes me to invoke the gods,
Had I in silence tamely borne her deeds,
Would not the murder'd, justly hating me,
Have rous'd the Furies to torment my soul?
Or hath she only her assisting fiends,
And he no fav'ring pow'r t' avenge his wrongs?
Thou, when to that bad daughter thou gav'st birth,
Didst give me ruin; for through her bold crime
I lost my father, and my mother slew.
Seest thou Ulysses' wife? Telemachus
Shed not her blood; for she, unstain'd with vice,
Guards her chaste bed with spotless sanctity.
Seest thou Apollo, who to mortal ears

Sounds from his central cave the voice of truth?
 Him we obey in all that he commands:
 Obeying his commands, I slew my mother;
 Drag him then to your bar, put him to death;
 The guilt is his, not mine. What should I do?
 The guilt on him transferr'd, is not the god
 Sufficient to absolve me? Where shall man
 Find refuge, if the god, at whose command
 I did it, will not now save me from death?
 Then say not that these deeds were done not well,
 But to the doers most unhappily.

If well accorded, the connubial state
 From all its strings speaks perfect harmony;
 If ill, at home, abroad, the harsh notes jar,
 And with rude discord wound the ear of Peace.

CHOR. That Peace to wound always our sex was born,
 Augmenting by our ills the ills of men.

TYND. What, dost thou brave me, and in proud defiance
 So answer, as to pierce my heart with grief?
 This pride will fire me more to urge thy death.
 One honest task I'll add to that which drew me
 Hither, to grace my murder'd daughter's tomb,
 This instant to th' assembled Argives go,
 And rouse the willing state, an easy task,
 To crush thee, and thy sister: she deserves,
 E'en more than thou, to die, whose accurs'd tongue
 Added new fierceness to thy fierce intents,
 Thine ears assailing with some bitter speech,
 That Agamemnon's shade haunted her dreams,
 That the tremendous pow'rs below abhorr'd
 Th' adulterous bed, fou! e'en to man's gross sense,
 Till all this house blaz'd in the flames she kindled.
 I tell thee, Menelaus, and I will do it,
 If thou regard my hate, or my alliance,
 Protect him not, by the just gods I charge thee,
 But leave him to the rigour of the laws,
 Or never dare to tread on Spartan ground.
 Hear me, and mark me; league not with the vile,

Nor scorn thy friends, whose breasts with virtue glow.
Here my attendants, lead me from this house.

ORESTES, MENELAUS, CHORUS.

- ORES. Why get thee gone, that I may plead to him,
Uninterrupted by thy wayward age.—
Why dost thou bend that way, then backward turn
Thoughtful thy step, absorb'd in anxious care?
- MEN. Forbear, and leave me to my thoughts, perplex'd
And unresolv'd which cause I should espouse.
- ORES. Suspend awhile thy judgment; hear me first,
First hear my plea; weigh it, and then resolve.
- MEN. Speak; thou hast reason: wisdom sometimes loves
To dwell with silence, sometimes woos the ear.
- ORES. Then let me urge my plea: and, oh! forgive me
If I seem tedious: grief is fond of words.
Give me not aught of thine; only return
What from my father's grace thou hast receiv'd.
I ask not thy rich treasures, yet a treasure
Richer than all thy stores; I ask my life.
Is this unjust? Let me from thee receive
Something unjust: such Agamemnon was,
Who led to Troy th' united arms of Greece:
Yet was the wrong not his; but to avenge
Thy wife's incontinent and foul offence.
For all his dangers, all his toils in war,
Borne as becomes a friend, in a friend's cause,
Give me one day for his ten years in arms.
To vindicate thy honour, one short day
Stand firm, my friend, the guardian of my life.
For thee at Aulis my poor sister died;
I am content, nor ask Hermione
A sacrifice for me: in my distress
Protect me, pity me; I ask no more,
To my unhappy father grant my life,
And save my sister, save her virgin years.
The house of Agamemnon sinks with me.
Impossible thou'lt say: When danger threatens,

The friend comes forth resolv'd, and shields his friend:
In fortune's golden smiles what need of friends?

Her fav'ring pow'r wants no auxiliary.

Greece sees thou lov'st thy wife: I speak not this

In flattery, to wind into thy bosom;

But I conjure thee by that love——Ah me!

How am I fall'n! Not for myself alone

I pour my pray'r, but for my father's house.

Now by the kindred blood, whose royal tide

Rolls in thy veins; by each endearing tie

Of fond relation and fraternal love,

Think that my murder'd father's injur'd shade

Burst from the realms of death, and hovers o'er thee;

And think, oh think the words I speak are his.

'Tis for my life I plead, life's dear to all,

With sighs, with groans, with tears: save me, oh save me!

CHOR. Low at thy knees a woman joins her pray'r,

Oh save them, save th' unhappy, for thou canst!

MEN. I hold thee dear, Orestes, and am willing

To give my friendly aid in thy distress;

Th' affinity of blood calls loudly on us

To share its toils, if the gods grant the pow'r,

Nor shrink appall'd at danger or at death;

And much I wish the gods would grant this pow'r:

But with a thousand toils oppress'd I come,

And lift a single spear, whose glitt'ring point

No squadrons follow wedg'd in firm array;

Few my remaining friends, and small my force.

With Argos then should we engage in arms,

We could not conquer; but with gentle words

Perchance we may: this way Hope smiles on us.

Who would with feeble forces aim at deeds

Of perilous proof? 'Twere folly to attempt it.

When rous'd to rage the madd'ning populace storms,

Their fury, like a rolling flame bursts forth

Unquenchable; but give its violence way,

It spends itself, and as its force abates,

Learns to obey, and yields it to your will:

Their passions varying thus, now rough with rage,
 Now melting with soft pity, Wisdom marks
 The change, and turns it to a rich account.
 Thus Tyndarus I will move, and th' Argive state
 To use their supreme pow'r with gentleness.
 The gallant bark, that too much swells her sails,
 Oft is o'erset, but let her pride be lower'd,
 She rides secure, and glories in the gale.
 Impetuous rage is hateful to the gods,
 Hateful to men: with cool unpassion'd reason
 (Discretion guides my words) I must preserve thee,
 And not, as thou perchance may'st deem, by force;
 Against the stronger what can force avail?
 Its trophies can my single spear erect
 Victorious o'er the ills that now assault thee?
 To be a suitor hath not been my use
 At Argos, but Necessity will teach us,
 If wise, submission to the pow'r of Fortune.

ORESTES, CHORUS.

ORES. Thou doughty champion of thy wife, good else
 For nought, in thy friend's cause a coward base,
 Thus dost thou slight me, turn thee thus away?
 Are Agamemnon's favours thus repaid?
 Thou hadst no friend, my father, in thy ills.
 Ah me! I am betray'd; e'en Hope forsakes me,
 And leaves me unprotected to my fate,
 Who on his shelt'ring pow'r alone relied.—
 But from his Phocians, see, with hasty step
 Here comes a friend indeed, my Pylades,
 A pleasing sight: for in distress a friend
 Comes like a calm to the toss'd mariner.

PYLADES, ORESTES, CHORUS.

PYL. With swift pace speed I through the city, hearing
 Their counsels, and discerning their intents
 T' adjudge thee and thy sister to quick death.
 But what! How fares my friend? What thy design?

Thou partner of my soul, companion dear,
Friend, kinsman, brother: thou art all to me.

ORES. To speak my woes in brief then, we are lost.

PYL. Then in thy ruin is thy friend involv'd.

ORES. The Spartan views us with malignant eye.

PYL. A vile wife to an husband match'd as vile.

ORES. To me no joy doth his arrival bring.

PYL. Is he indeed then at this land arriv'd?

ORES. Late, but soon found unfaithful to his friends.

PYL. And brought he his disloyal wife with him?

ORES. In truth he brought not her, but she brought him.

PYL. Where is this pest, that hath unpeopled Greece?

ORES. Here in my house, if I may call it mine.

PYL. What to thy father's brother didst thou say?

ORES. Not to see me and my poor sister slain.

PYL. Now by the gods, what answer did he give?

ORES. Timid and cautious, like a faithless friend.

PYL. With what excuses his denial cloak'd?

ORES. The father of these female worthies came.

PYL. Incens'd and chafing for his daughter's death?

ORES. E'en so: for him my father was disdain'd.

PYL. And wants he courage here t' assert thy cause?

ORES. No warrior he, but among women brave.

PYL. Then have thy woes their full weight: thou must die.

ORES. First the deciding vote must pass against us.

PYL. Deciding what? I tremble as I ask.

ORES. Or life, or death. Few words speak great events.

PYL. Fly then, and with thy sister leave this house.

ORES. Seest thou the guards that close their weapons round?

PYL. Each street I saw, each pass secur'd with arms.

ORES. We are invested, like a sea-girt town.

PYL. Mine also is misfortune, ruin mine.

ORES. Ruin! from whence? Thy ills augment my woes.

PYL. My father in his rage hath banish'd me.

ORES. What, on some public, or a private charge?

PYL. As impious, aiding in thy mother's death.

ORES. Unhappy, shalt thou suffer in my ills?

PYL. I shall not, like the Spartan, shrink from them.

ORES. Like mine, should Argos meditate thy death!

PYL. They have no right; I am no subject here.

ORES. The many, when bad rulers prompt to ill,
Regard no rights.

PYL. But when good lead to good,
Their councils well advis'd breathe temperate wisdom.

ORES. Well, be it so. But shall we now consult
Our common good.

PYL. Propose th' important theme.

ORES. To urge my plea before them.

PYL. Vindicate

Thy deed as righteous?

ORES. Righteous, as avenging

My father's blood.

PYL. Harshly, I fear, their brows

Will frown upon thee.

ORES. Should fear hold me mute,

And yield me tame to death?

PYL. Unmanly that.

ORES. What should I do?

PYL. Hast thou, remaining here,

Prospect of safety?

ORES. Safety dwells not here.

PYL. In going hast thou hope?

ORES. Should it take well,

It might succeed.

PYL. Attempt it boldly then;

Go: if to die, 'tis nobler to die there.

ORES. My cause is just.

PYL. Would heav'n they so may think!

ORES. Thus I avoid the charge of guilty fear.

Some one, indignant at my father's death,

Perchance may pity me.

PYL. I see it all,

And the bright lustre thy high birth throws round thee.

ORES. I will not stay, and like a coward slave

Die tamely here.

PYL. I praise thy noble spirit.

ORES. But to my sister shall we make this known?

PYL. No, I conjure thee.

ORES. She would be all tears.

PYL. Avoid the omen then; in silence go;
Nor let her grief unseasonably detain thee.

ORES. Yet one distress afflicts me: should the Furies
Rouse all their terrors, and affright my soul.

PYL. My care shall watch around thee.

ORES. To attend
A man disorder'd thus, to guard, to hold him,
Is an unpleasing office.

PYL. But for thee
Delightful to my love.

ORES. Yet have a care
Lest my contagious frenzy seize on thee.

PYL. No more of frenzy.

ORES. Wilt thou not be shock'd
At this hard task?

PYL. No office shocks a friend.

ORES. Be thou my pilot then.

PYL. A welcome charge.

ORES. And guide my footsteps to my father's tomb,
That I may pour my supplications there,
And move his shade to aid me.

PYL. Pious this,
And just.

ORES. But from my mother's lead me far:
Let me not see it.

PYL. All is hostile there.
But haste thee, e'er the fatal vote be pass'd.
Lean on me, let me throw my arm around thee,
Thus hold thee, thus support thy feeble limbs,
And bear thee through the crowd of gazing eyes
Regardless. Where shall friendship shew its faith,
If now in thy afflictions I forsake thee?

ORES. This is to have a friend: compar'd to this
What are the ties of blood? The man, who melts
With social sympathy, though not allied,

Is than a thousand kinsmen of more worth.

CHORUS.

STRO. Th' exalted state, th' imperial pow'r,
Which spread o'er Greece its ample sway,
And, girt with war, on the barbaric shore
Taught the proud streams of Simois to obey,
Withdraw their glories. Discord (as of old
Fierce 'midst the sons of Tantalus she rose,
And for the rich ram fleec'd with gold
Prepar'd the feast of horrid woes;
Whence Vengeance bared the flaming sword,
And blood for blood remorseless pour'd;)
Now through the house of Atreus lords it wide,
And fill'd with carnage swells her sanguine pride.

ANTIS. Honour is honour now no more,
Since with fierce rage he dar'd invade
His parent's breast; and, his hand stain'd with gore,
Wav'd to the golden sun his crimson blade.
Ill actions are displeasing to the skies,
And moon-eyed Folly marks them for her own.
Heard'st thou not Clytemnestra's cries,
Her thrilling shrieks, her dying moan?
"The mother by the son to bleed!"
"Ah, dare not: 'tis an impious deed:
"Nor, in wild rev'rence to thy father's name,
"Blot with eternal infamy thy fame!"

EPOD. Is there in all heav'n's angry store
Misfortune, sorrow, sickness, pain,
Is there an ill that racks, that tortures more
Than by th' unpitying son the parent slain?
Ah spare, unhappy youth, thy mother spare!—
'Tis done: like vultures see the Furies rise,
And rend his soul with wild despair:

864. It was the custom of the ancients, when any one had avenged himself by the slaughter of another, with justice and honour as he thought, to wave his bloody sword to the sun, as if he made the gods witnesses of his innocence.

Barnes.

See how he rolls his haggard eyes !
 When from her gold-embroider'd vest
 Suppliant she bared her heaving breast,
 Ah, could'st thou strike?—He struck.—O deed abhorr'd !
 And ruthless in her bosom plung'd the sword.

ELECTRA, CHORUS.

- ELEC. Ye virgins, hath the poor Orestes, struck
 With madness from the gods, rush'd from the house?
 CHOR. Not so; but to th' assembled state of Argos
 He goes, resolv'd to strive in this hard contest,
 Where life to him and thee, or death's the prize.
 ELEC. Ah me, what hath he done? Who counsell'd this?
 CHOR. Pylades: but this messenger will tell thee
 All that hath pass'd touching thy brother there.

MESSENGER, ELECTRA, CHORUS.

- MESS. Unhappy daughter of that mighty chief,
 Who led the pow'rs of Greece, rever'd Electra,
 How shall my tongue disclose this tale of woe?
 ELEC. Ah me! we are no more: thy falt'ring voice
 In broken accents speaks the tragic tale.
 MESS. E'en so: the fatal sentence is pronounc'd:
 This day thy brother and thyself must die.
 ELEC. Long have my fears, presaging this event,
 With mournful expectation sunk my heart.
 But was there no debate? Whose ruling voice
 Procur'd this sentence? Tell me, good old man,
 Arm they their hands with stones? Or by the sword
 Together sink we in one common death?
 MESS. I left my rural cottage, and the gates
 Of Argos enter'd, with fond wish to learn
 To thee and to Orestes what had chanc'd,
 Prompted by that high reverence which I bore
 Thy father; for his house supported me,
 Though poor, yet not unfaithful. Soon I saw
 The thronging people hurry to that height
 Where, as they say, Ægyptus gave them seats

When Danaus was adjudg'd to punishment.
 Astonish'd at the sight, I ask'd if war
 New threat'ning rous'd the city thus : an Argive
 Gave answer, Seest thou not Orestes there ?
 He goes to plead his cause; and life or death
 Hangs on his voice. I look'd, and near me saw,
 O piteous spectacle ! what least I hop'd
 To see, thy brother : as he walk'd, his eyes
 Fix'd on the ground, his fever-weaken'd limbs,
 Supported by his friend, whose faithful care,
 Touch'd with like grief, guided his feeble steps.
 Soon as th' assembly sate, the herald's voice
 Proclaim'd free speech to all, who will'd to speak,
 Whether Orestes for his mother slain
 Should die, or not. 'Talthybius first arose,
 Who with thy father storm'd the tow'rs of Troy :
 Double and dark his speech, as one who lives
 The slave of greatness : to thy father high
 Respect he paid, but to thy brother's praise
 Silent, in honourable terms involv'd
 His ill intent, as that he modell'd laws
 'Gainst parents not beseeming : but his eye
 Always glanc'd cheerful on Ægisthus' friends :
 For such their nature ; the warm shine of fortune
 Allures them, vassals to the rich and great.
 Next rose the royal Diomedé ; his voice
 Allow'd not death, but exile, to atone
 The deed : discordant clamours echoed round,
 As approbation prompted, or dislike.
 An Argive, not an Argive, next arose,
 His birth barbaric, of licentious tongue,
 Presumptuous, turbulent, and prompt to lead
 With empty noise the populace to ill :
 For the smooth tongue, that charms to mischief, bears
 A pestilent pow'r ; whilst Wisdom, aiming still

943. The poet is here supposed to reflect upon the factious Cleophon, who, though of Athenian parents, was born in Thrace. *Scholias.*

At virtue, brings its honourable thought,
Though late, to glorious issue; her grave voice
Authority, that owes its best grace to it,
Should countenance, and cheek the factious tongue:
This wretch, suborn'd by Tyndarus, clamour'd loud
For death, the harshest death, involving thee
In the same ruin: but another rose
Of different sentiment; no slightly gaud,
But one in whose plain form the eye might note
A manly, free, direct integrity
Temper'd with prudence; one who rarely join'd
The city circles, in his small domain,
Which his own culturing hand had taught to smile,
Passing in honest peace his blameless days:
His voice to Agamemnon's son decreed
A crown, his noble father who aveng'd
By slaying that abandon'd impious woman,
Whose vile deeds check'd the soldier's generous flame;
For who in distant fields, at honour's call,
Would wield his martial arms, if in his absence
Pollution stain his wife, and his pure bed
Be made a foul sty of adulterous lust?
The virtuous all approv'd. Orestes now,
Preventing further argument, advanc'd,
And thus address'd them, Ye illustrious Argives,
Who from a line of ancient heroes draw
Your high-born race, to vindicate your honour,
Not less than to avenge my father's death,
I did this deed: for should the husband's blood
Leave on the wife's hand no foul stain, full soon
The purple tide would flow, or you must sink,
O shame to manhood! vile slaves to your wives.
Now she, that to my father's bed was false,
Hath died for it: if you require my life,
The law hath lost its force; and who shall say
His own life is secure, as these bold deeds
From frequency draw force, and mock at justice?
These truths were lost in air; and that vile talker,

Whose malice call'd for death to both, prevail'd.
 Harsh was the sentence, and th' unhappy youth
 Scarce gain'd this sad indulgence, leave to die
 By his own hand this day: thou too must die.
 Him from th' assembly Pylades with tears
 Leads this way, by a few, a faithful few
 Accompanied, whose eyes melting with pity
 Rain bitter dew: he comes, a dismal sight,
 To pierce thy soul with grief. But haste, prepare
 The sword: thou too must die: thy high-born race
 Avails not, nor the Oracle of Phœbus,
 Whose fatal answer brings destruction on you.

CHOR. Why, miserable virgin, dost thou bend
 Thy clouded eye to th' earth? Why silent thus?
 Give thy griefs voice, and let thy sorrows flow.

ELECTRA.

STRO. Yes, I will let my sorrows flow,
 And give to grief the melancholy strain,
 And, as the mournful notes complain
 With all the heart-felt agony of woe,
 These hands my bleeding cheeks shall tear,
 And beat this head in wild despair,
 Devoted to the queen, that rules beneath
 The realms of darkness and of death.
 Daughters of Argos, with loud shrieks deplore
 The house of Atreus, now no more.
 Fall'n, by too severe a fate,
 From the proud glories of its splendent state.

ANTIS. Low, low they lie, th' imperial line,
 Th' imperial race of Pelops vanish'd, gone;
 No trace remains, no name, no son:
 Their vaunted honours in the dust decline.
 From envious gods these ruins come,
 And the harsh city's bloody doom.
 Short is the day of life, each little hour
 With toils, with mis'ries clouded o'er:
 Should bright'ning Hope, to cheer the troubled day,

Pour through the gloom a transient ray,
Fate comes, and o'er the darken'd scene
Spreads the deep horrors of its dreary reign.

EPOD.

Oh for an eagle's wing, whose rapid flight
Might bear me to th' ethereal height,
Where to Olympus fix'd the golden chain
Suspends the pond'rous, trembling mass:
There should my woe-wild notes complain
To the hoar author of my race.
From Tantalus our lineage springs,
A mighty race of sceptred kings:
Great as they are, around them wait
The vengeful ministers of fate;
Since Pelops with impetuous force
Lash'd his proud steeds, and urg'd their fiery course;
And as the bounding wheels they bore
Along Geræstus' rock-rough shore,
Saw Myrtilus extended there,
Hurl'd headlong from the rapid car;
With gloomy joy he smil'd, and gave
The mangled limbs to stain the foaming wave.
To Atreus thence pernicious came
From Maia's son the fatal Ram,
Who gave his golden fleece to shine
Destructive, a destructive sign.

1040. Myrtilus, the son of Mercury, was the Charioteer of Œnomaus, who was told by the Oracle that the marriage of his daughter Hippodamia would be fatal to him: he therefore endeavoured to keep her unmarried, and each suitor was obliged to contend with him in a chariot race from Pisa to the altar of Neptune on the Isthmus at Corinth: the conditions were these; the lover started first, Œnomaus then sacrificed a ram to Jupiter, and pursued, holding in his hand a spear, with which he was to slay the youth if he should overtake him. Thirteen perished in this manner: yet Pelops was not dismayed: he was victorious; some relate that he gained Myrtilus by bribes; Pindar says that Neptune gave him a golden chariot, and fleet horses unwearied in the race,

—τὸν μὲν ἀγάλλων θεὸς
ἴδωκεν δίφρον χεῦσι, ἐν πατρὶ.
οἷν τ' ἀκάμαντας ἵππους.

Olymp. Ode i.

Myrtilus was thrown from the chariot, and killed.

Hence, Discord, hence thy horrid deeds
 Startled the sun's indignant steeds;
 Back to the East they wing their way,
 And meet the Morn's affrighted ray:
 The Pleiads, hast'ning to advance,
 Start back, and change their sev'n-fold dance.
 Hence false Aërope in honied smiles
 Conceal'd her wanton, ruinous wiles:
 Hence to Thyestes' horrid feast
 Came Slaughter, a tremendous guest;
 And, her hand reeking with my father's blood,
 Draws from my heart the purple flood.

CHOR. But see thy brother, by the Argive state
 Condemn'd to bleed, advances slow; and with him
 The faithful Pylades with a brother's love
 Shares in his griefs, and guides his feeble steps.

ELECTRA, ORESTES, PYLADES, CHORUS.

ELEC. Ah me! my brother, whilst I yet behold thee
 Let me indulge my grief, e'er yet the tomb,
 Yet e'er the solemn pyre in its black shade
 Wraps our dead limbs, let me indulge my grief,
 My frenetic grief; fix my fond eyes upon thee,
 That never, never must behold thee more.

ORES. Wilt thou not cease these womanish wailings, meet
 This harsh decree with silence, and abide,
 Firmly abide the rigour of our fate?

ELEC. Can I be silent, when our eyes no more
 Shall see yon golden sun's irradiate light?

ORES. Kill me not thou: forbear: enough of death
 Have I already from the hands of Argos.

ELEC. Thy youth I mourn, and thy untimely death:
 Life was thy due, when, ah! thou art no more.

ORES. Now by the gods, throw not this softness round me,
 Nor make th' unmanly tear drop at our woes.

ELEC. We die: and shall the tear not flow? That dew
 Pity will shed o'er the lost joys of life.

ORES. This day must we needs die: prepare we then

The sword, or other instrument of death.

ELEC. My brother, do thou kill me; let no Argive
Touch with his rude hand Agamemnon's daughter.

ORES. No: in thy mother's blood I have enough;
I shed not thine; but by thy own hand die.

ELEC. I will; and not desert thy honest sword.
But let me throw my fond arms round thy neck.

ORES. Vain is the joy, if yet it be a joy,
In death to sooth thee with a last embrace.

ELEC. My brother! O that dearest, best-lov'd name,
Dear to thy sister, partner of my soul!

ORES. Why wilt thou melt me thus? And yet I wish,
Returning thy embrace, to fold thee close,
Close in my arms; nor modesty forbids;
It is my sister: let me clasp thee then,
And press thee to my bosom, fondly press thee.
This sweet exchange of love is all our woes
Allow us for the names of wedded joys.

ELEC. Oh may the same sword end us, the same tomb
Close in its cedar hearsement our cold limbs!

ORES. That would be joy: but destitute of friends
Who shall inurn us in one common tomb?

ELEC. Did Menelaus my father then betray?
Did not the wretch plead earnest for thy life?

ORES. He durst not shew his false eye; but, his hopes
Fix'd on the sceptre, fear'd to save his friends.

But let us in our death give shiiping proof
Of our illustrious birth: my hand shall shew
My high nobility, and plunge the sword
Intrepid through my breast: dare thou the like.

Thou, Pylades, be umpire of our death;
With decent care compose our breathless limbs,
And lay them in my father's sepulchre.

Farewell. I go to execute the deed.

PYL. Yet stay: one charge against thee must I bring,
Shou'dst thou but hope I would survive thy death.

ORES. And what avails it that thou die with me?

PYL. Without thy converse what can life avail?

ORES. Thou hast not slain thy mother : I slew mine.

PYL. I shar'd the deed : the suff'ring I should share.

ORES. Oh save thee for thy father ; die not with me :

Thou hast a country ; that name's lost to me :

Thou hast a father's house, hast greatness, wealth.

If this ill-fated maid, whom to thy arms,

The sanction of our friendship, I betroth'd,

If she be lost, some other nuptial bed

Awaits to bless thee with a father's joys.

Our dear relation is no more : my friend,

Thou, whose sweet converse was my soul's delight,

Farewell : for thee the joys of life remain ;

To us they wither in the shade of death.

PYL. Wide from my honest purpose dost thou stray.

May not the fertile earth, nor the bright air

Receive my blood, if ever I forsake thee,

To spare myself if ever I forsake thee.

Together I design'd, together wrought

Thy mother's death, which draws this fate on thee :

Together will I die with thee, and her ;

Dear to my soul, affianc'd to my bed,

I deem her as my wife. Should I return

To Delphi, the high citadel of Phocis,

Dare I name honour, if united thus

Whilst fortune favour'd your high state, but now

The false friend shrink from your adversity ?

Not so : these things demand my deep regard.

Yet, e'er we die, some measures let us form

T' afflict with grief the heart of Menelaus.

ORES. Let me see that, my friend, then let me die !

PYL. Be then advis'd, and let the keen sword wait.

ORES. Shall then my just revenge burst on his head ?

PYL. No more : these women ; I distrust their faith.

ORES. They are all truth, all friendship ; fear them not.

PYL. Let us slay Helen : that would grieve his soul.

ORES. How ? I approve it, be it nobly done.

PYL. Let the sword end her : in thy house she lurks.

ORES. She doth, and seals its treasures for her own.

- PYL. Espous'd to Pluto she will seal no more.
ORES. But how, around her that barbaric train?
PYL. What are they? For of Phrygians nought I dread.
ORES. Marshals of mirrors and cosmetic washes.
PYL. Brings she these Trojan gewgaws back to Greece?
ORES. Greece! 'Tis a paltry spot; she breathes not in it.
PYL. Well may the free disdain an host of slaves.
ORES. T' achieve this deed, twice would I die with joy.
PYL. Twice would I die, might I thy vengeance aid.
ORES. Disclose thy purpose, and accomplish it.
PYL. We enter, as in readiness to die.
ORES. Thus far I comprehend thee, but no more.
PYL. To her with loud laments bewail our fate.
ORES. T' extort the tear, though her heart bounds with joy.
PYL. This be her hour: the next may we enjoy.
ORES. How then to execute the destin'd deed?
PYL. Bear we our swords conceal'd beneath our vests.
ORES. But can destruction reach her 'midst her train?
PYL. Confin'd apart nought shall that crew avail.
ORES. And if one dares to clamour, let him die.
PYL. In that th' immediate exigence will guide us.
ORES. The death of Helen then, that is the word.
PYL. Agreed. That honour dictates this, now hear.
To draw the sword against a virtuous woman
Would blot our names with infamy. Her blood
All Greece demands, for sons, for fathers slain
In her curs'd cause, for the deep sigh that rends
The widow'd matron's desolated heart.
Shouts of applause would rend the air, thick fires
Blaze to the gods, and many a fervent prayer
Draw blessings on our heads. No longer call'd
The murderer of thy mother, thou shalt hear
Th' applauding voice of Greece with triumph hail thee
Revenger of the mischief-working Helen.
What, shall the treacherous Menelaus then smile,
Proud of his high success; and, whilst thy father,
Thyself, thy sister fall, thy mother too,
(But I forbear; for Honour at her name

Dims its pale fires;) seize thy rich-treasur'd house
As his inheritance, and in amorous folds
Clasp his fair wife, by Agamemnon's spear
Recover'd to his arms? Let me not live,
If I not draw the gloomy sword against her.
Failing in this, we'll set the house on flames,
And nobly in the blazing ruins die.
One must succeed: the glory shall be ours
To die with honour, or with honour live.

CHOR. This guilty fair, a scandal to her sex,
Merits th' abhorrence of each virtuous dame.

ORES. Life hath no blessing like a prudent friend,
Than treasur'd wealth more precious, than the pow'r
Of monarchs, and the people's loud applause.
Thou on Ægisthus guidedst my just rage,
Nor in my dangers wast thou absent: now
Thou giv'st me vengeance on mine enemies,
Nor shrinks thy firm foot back. But I forbear,
Nor with intemperate praise thine ear offend.
I will not tamely die; but in my fall
Pull ruin on my foes: they too shall weep,
The traitors, they shall have their share of woe.
Th' illustrious Agamemnon was my sire,
Imperial chief of Greece; no tyrant he,
But cloth'd with th' awful pow'r of the just gods;
I will not blot his splendors, like a slave
Crouching to death; but with a liberal pride
Throw life away, first glorying in revenge.
Whiche'er succeeds, we triumph: yet if thence
Despair force safety, if the sword should glance
From us, and wound their breasts, I have my wish:
Transport is in the thought, and the light words,
Charg'd with no costly pleasure, sooth my soul.

ELEC. And this suggests a thought, which lifts my mind
To hope success and safety to us all.

ORES. The prescience of a god inspires thy voice.
But how? Oh say, for wisdom too is thine.

ELEC. Then hear: and thou, my brother, mark my words.

ORES. Speak: there is pleasure in the hope of good.

ELEC. The daughter of this Helen dost thou know?

ORES. The fair Hermione, our mother's charge?

ELEC. She now is gone to Clytemnestra's tomb.

ORES. With what intent? Thy words awaken hope.

ELEC. To pour libations for her mother there.

ORES. As means of safety dost thou tell me this?

ELEC. Her, when she enters, as an hostage seize.

ORES. And what relief can thy thoughts hope from her?

ELEC. If Menelaus shall for his slaughter'd wife

Attempt revenge on thee, or me, or him,

(For the close bond of friendship makes us one,)

Tell him that thou wilt kill Hermione,

And hold the drawn sword to the virgin's breast:

If trembling for his daughter, when he sees

His wife all welt'ring in her blood, he saves

Thy life, the virgin give him back unhurt.

But should his wild ungovernable rage

Demand thy life, plunge deep th' unpitying steel.

Yet I am well assur'd his rage, though fierce

At first, will soften soon; for Nature form'd him

Nor bold, nor brave: this then I deem the fort

That guards our lives. You have what I advise.

ORES. Thou excellence, that to the form divine,

The sweet attractive charm of female grace,

Hast join'd a manly spirit, shalt thou die?

Shalt thou, my friend, deplore her loss, with whom,

Accomplish'd as she is, a life of love

Were happiness supreme?

PYL. Would heav'n indulge

My warm wish, tow'ring Phocis should receive her,

With golden Hymen smiling in our train.

ORES. When will Hermione return? Our toils,

If we can take the young one, must succeed,

And gloriously entangle the old savage.

ELEC. Each moment, such the distance, I expect her.

ORES. 'Tis well. My sister, my Electra, wait

Here, and receive the virgin. Let thine eye
 Keep wary watch; if friend, or partizan,
 Or e'en my father's brother to the house,
 Approach to hinder us, some signal give,
 Or beat the door, or raise thy shrilling voice.
 And now, my friend, still faithful to my toils,
 Address we to this great emprise, and ent'ring
 Each with the sword of justice arm our hands.
 And thou, who in the gloomy house of night
 Hast thy sad dwelling, father, royal shade,
 Thy son, Orestes, calls thee; at my prayers
 Assistant come: for thee these sufferings fall
 Unjustly on my head, for my just deeds.
 Betray'd by thy base brother, 'gainst his wife
 My stern intents are bent: aid our revenge.

ELEC. Father, if in the realms beneath thou hear
 Thy children call, oh come! for thee we die.

PYL. Spirit of Agamemnon, kindred shade,
 Hear me too, hear thy suppliant: save thy children!

ORES. I slew my mother.

PYL. My hand touch'd the sword.

ELEC. And my bold counsels prompted to the deed.

ORES. T' avenge thee, father.

ELEC. Nor did I betray thee.

PYL. Hear this, indignant shade, and save thy children!

ORES. Accept th' oblation of these tears.

ELEC. Accept

These groans.

PYL. Now cease; and haste we to the deed.

If to the realms beneath prayers wing their way,

He hears. Thou Jove, our great progenitor,

Awfully just, to him, to me, to her

Extend thy guardian pow'r; this trinal band

One cause, one safety, or one ruin joins;

We live together or together die.

1289. Anaxibia, the wife of Strophius and mother of Pylades, was the sister of Agamemnon.

ELECTRA, CHORUS.

- ELEC. Virgins of high Pelasgian race,
Achaia's pride, Mycenæ's grace!
- CHOR. Why, royal maid, these plaintive strains?
That name, that title yet remains.
- ELEC. Divide, divide; with careful view
Watch you the street, the entrance you.
- CHOR. And why to us this task assign'd!
Unfold, sweet friend, unfold thy mind.
- ELEC. Lest any, standing near the gate,
Find in this scene of blood her fate.
- 1st SEM. Haste, to your stations quickly run:
My watch be tow'rd's the rising sun.
- 2d SEM. Be mine with cautious care address
To where he sinks him in the west.
- ELEC. Now here, now there, now far, now nigh,
Quick-glancing dart th' observant eye.
- 1st SEM. With fond affection we obey,
Our eyes quick-glancing ev'ry way.
- ELEC. Glance through that length of hair, which flows
Light-waving o'er your shaded brows.
- 1st SEM. This way a man comes hast'ning down;
His garb bespeaks some simple clown.
- ELEC. Undone, undone, should he disclose
These couch'd, arm'd lions to their foes.
- 1st SEM. He passes on, suppress thy fear,
And all this way again is clear.

ELECTRA to 2d SEMICHORUS.

- And that way doth no footstep rude
Disturb the wish'd-for solitude?
- 2d SEM. This way no rude step beats the ground,
But all is still, all safe around.
- ELEC. Patience exhausted bears no more:
Near will I listen at the door.
Favour'd with silence, why so slow
To let the purple torrent flow?
Blinded by beauty's dazzling ray
Do your charm'd swords refuse t' obey?

They hear not. Rous'd at these alarms
Some Argive soon will rush in arms;
And in her aid vindictive spread

^ Horror and ruin on our head.
Watch, virgins, watch with strictest care,
Repose hath nothing to do here.

CHOR. With transverse watch our heedful eye
Each various way——

HEL. Io, Pelasgian Argos, I am slain! [within.

ELEC. Hark: their bold hands are in the bloody act.
It was the cry of Helena, I deem.

CHOR. O Jove, eternal pow'r, hear us, and ever
Protect our friends!

HEL. My dearest Menelaus,
I die: where art thou? fly, oh fly to save me!

ELEC. Kill, slay, strike, wound, dispatch, destroy:

With iron smiles of gloomy joy
Plunge deep the huge tempestuous blade,

For blood, for death, for carnage made,

Deep in her breast. She basely fled

Her father's house, her husband's bed:

Hence many a Greek in battle slain

Lies mould'ring on the Phrygian plain:

Hence, to call forth the bursting tear,

The arrowy show'r, the hurtling spear;

And hence Scamander's silver flood

Whirls his swoln eddies stain'd with blood.

CHOR. Hark! hark! I hear the sound of feet:

The marble pavement now they beat.

ELEC. Whilst Slaughter is at work, my virgin friends,

Hermione comes: cease we the measure then:

She walks into our toils, a goodly prize.

Silent resume your stations; fix'd your eye,

Let not your countenance betray the deed.

My eye shall take again its mournful cast,

As unacquainted with this havoc here.

HERMIONE, ELECTRA, CHORUS.

ELEC. From Clytemnestra's tomb comest thou, virgin,
Thy hallow'd offerings and libations paid?

HERM. I have appeas'd her shade. But from this house
The voice of loud lament e'er my approach
Struck my astonish'd ear: it makes me tremble.

ELEC. Well it beseems us: we have cause for cries.

HERM. Be thy voice tuned to good. Is there aught new?

ELEC. Orestes and myself are doom'd to die.

HERM. Be it not so, by blood to me allied!

ELEC. Necessity lays its iron yoke on us.

HERM. For this did these laments sound from the house?

ELEC. Suppliant at Helen's feet he rais'd the cry.

HERM. Who? for my knowledge on thy words depends.

ELEC. The poor Orestes, for his life and mine.

HERM. Just cause for lamentation hath this house.

ELEC. Can nature know a stronger? But come thou,
Join in the supplications of thy friends,
Fall at thy mother's knees, how blest her state!
That Menelaus allow not that we die.

O thou, who from my mother's hand receiv'dst
Thy infant nurture, look with pity on us,
Our woes alleviate, to the trial go,
My foot shall lead, sweet prop of all our hopes!

HERM. And willingly I follow: if my voice,
My prayers, my pow'r avail, ye shall not die.

ELEC. You there within the house, ye armed friends,
Will you not seize your prey?

HERM. Ah, who are these
Terrible to mine eye!

ORES. No noise, no cry: [*advancing.*]
To us, not to thyself, thou bringest safety.

ELEC. Here seize her, seize her; to her trembling breast
Point your keen swords, and awe her into silence.
Let Menelaus perceive he hath found Men,
Not Phrygian slaves; Men, whose bold spirits dare
Retort his foul wrongs on his own base head.

[*They lead her off.*]

Now, my lov'd virgins, raise your voices high;
 Before the house ring out the notes of woe,
 That this bold deed spread no alarm, nor call
 Th' astonish'd Argives to these royal gates,
 Till I see Helen rolling in her blood,
 Or from the slaves attending learn her fate.

CHOR. Justice unsheath'd her awful sword,
 And Vengeance snatch'd it from her hand:
 From heav'n her rapid flight she pour'd,
 And plung'd in Helen's breast the glitt'ring brand.
 For this accurs'd, this fatal fair
 Fill'd Greece with many a mournful tear,
 Since the pernicious Phrygian boy
 Enamour'd bore her wanton charms to Troy.
 Hush, hush; the palace door resounds; break off;
 A Phrygian slave comes forth: learn we from him
 What fate hath wrought within.

PHRYGIAN, CHORUS.

PHRY. The Grecian sword from death I fled,
 In these barbaric sandals was my flight,
 Climbing the pillar's sculptur'd head,
 And o'er the cedar rafter's height:
 For th' unkind earth refus'd to save
 A flying, a barbaric slave.
 Whither, ah, whither shall I fly?
 Oh say, ye virgin strangers, say,
 Mount the grey regions of the sky,
 Or through the foaming billows dash my way,
 Where, the firm globe encircling wide,
 Vex'd Ocean rolls his roaring tide?

CHOR. Servant of Helen, Phrygian, whence these cries?

PHRY. O Ilium, Ilium! Woe, woe, woe!
 Ye tow'rs, the fertile Phrygia's stately boast!
 O sacred Ida's pine-crown'd brow!
 I mourn, I mourn your glories lost:
 For you these doleful notes complain,
 A mournful, a barbaric strain.

From Leda's egg, the Swan her sire,
 The beauteous, baleful Helen rose :
 Whose eye on heav'n-built Troy glares fire,
 And the rich seat of Ganymede o'erthrows :
 Hence flows, for chiefs, for heroes slain,
 The mournful, the barbaric strain.

CHOR. No longer hold us in suspense ; relate
 Each circumstance : conjecture errs from truth.

PHRY. It is the song of death : your pardon then
 That I indulg'd the melancholy strain.
 In Asia with barbaric voice we raise
 These notes of woe, when by the ruthless sword
 The blood of kings is shed upon the earth.
 But to my tale. Of lion port came in
 Two of your Grecians ; father to the one
 Th' illustrious leader of your troops : and one
 The son of Strophius, of deep reserve,
 And dang'rous, dark design ; such was the chief
 Of Ithaca, but faithful to his friends,
 In battle bold, and in the works of war
 Of sage experience ; as a dragon fierce ;
 Perdition on his silence, which conceal'd
 Designs of death. Together they advanc'd
 To the bright queen whom Paris call'd his wife,
 Their eyes suffus'd with tears, humble their mien,
 And at her knees, on each side one, they fell
 Besieging her : back start the slaves, back starts
 Each Phrygian minister, some fearing fraud,
 More unsuspecting some, whilst others thought
 This dragon, crimson'd with his mother's blood,
 The beauteous Spartan in his toils inclos'd.

CHOR. Where then wast thou ? Hadst thou first fled through fear ?

PHRY. I then was standing, in our Phrygian mode
 Was standing near, and with the feather'd fan
 Rais'd the soft gales to breathe upon her cheeks,
 In our barbaric mode, to bid their breath
 Sport in the ringlets of her waving hair.
 Her curious fingers guide the thread, the spoils

Of Phrygia, whose rich texture form'd the woof
T' adorn the purple pall, a mournful present
To Clytemnestra. With mild voice Orestes
Entreats her to arise, and go with him
To an age-honour'd altar, in old times
The seat of Pelops, his great ancestor,
That she might hear his words: he led her, ah!
He led her: unprophetic of her fate
She follow'd. The vile Phocian, his compeer,
Seiz'd the occasion, and with stern command
Bade us be gone; then, dragg'd to separate cells,
Confin'd us from our royal mistress far.

CHOR. What terrible event ensued? Oh, say!

PHRY. Goddess of Ida, potent, potent queen!
What scenes of blood, what impious deeds these eyes,
These eyes amidst the royal rooms beheld!
Each in his fierce hand grasp'd the sword conceal'd
Beneath their purple vests, his fiery glance,
Heedful of interruption, darting round;
Then, like two mountain boars, before the queen
They stood, and thunder'd, Thou shalt die, shalt die;
Thy coward husband kills thee, who in Argos
Betrays his brother's family to death.
She shriek'd aloud, and raising her white arm
In miserable manner beat her head;
Then bent her golden-sandall'd feet to flight.
But rushing fierce Orestes in her hair
Lock'd his rude hand, and bending to the left
Her head, prepar'd to plunge th' impetuous sword
Deep in her throat.

CHOR. Where were her Phrygians then?
They ran, belike, on all sides to her aid.

PHRY. Rous'd by her cries we burst the bars, and each
From forth his separate cell rush'd to her aid:
Some in their hasty hands snatch'd stones, some seiz'd
The beamy spear, th' unwieldy falchion some:
'Gainst us in dreadless rage the Phocian came,
Fierce as the Trojan Hector, fierce as Ajax,

Whose triple-crested helm I saw, I saw
 Dreadfully waving in the gates of Priam.
 Clashing our swords met his: but then, oh then
 Was seen how weak, how spiritless our arms
 Oppos'd in fight against the force of Greece;
 One hasty running, dying one, one gash'd
 With wounds, wild with affright another bends
 Imploring mercy: sheltering in the dark
 We fly, and all was terror, blood, and death.
 Just as th' uplifted sword threaten'd to shed
 Her mother's blood on th' earth, Hermione came:
 Swift with unhallow'd rage they dart on her,
 And seize their trembling prey; then turn again
 To execute the work of death on Helen.
 Meanwhile, O heav'n! O earth! O day! O night!
 Forth from the chamber through the vestibule,
 Whether by some enchantment, by the pow'r
 Of magic, or the stealth of fav'ring gods,
 She vanish'd. What hath happen'd since I know not,
 Intent on hasty flight to save myself.
 For all his toils, all his distressful toils
 Barren return hath Menelaus receiv'd,
 And led his beauteous wife from Troy in vain.

CHOR. Terror succeeds to terror; for mine eyes
 Behold Orestes there before the house
 Walk with disorder'd pace, and grasp his sword.

ORESTES, PHRYGIAN, CHORUS.

ORES. Where is the slave, who this way fled my sword.

PHRY. Low at thy feet, such our barbaric use,
 Thus prostrate I implore thy mercy, king.

ORES. This is not Ilium, but the land of Greece.

PHRY. In any land life to the wise is sweet.

ORES. Hast thou rais'd cries to call the Spartan's aid?

PHRY. Thee rather would I aid: more worthy thou.

ORES. This Helen then, with justice did she die?

PHRY. Most justly: had she three lives, she should lose them.

ORES. Thy servile fear smooths thy dissembling tongue.

PHRY. No. Should she live, who wasted Greece and Troy?

ORES. Swear, I will kill thee else, thou flatterest not.

PHRY. Now by my life I swear, sincerely swear.

ORES. Was the steel dreadful thus to all at Troy?

PHRY. Keep thy sword off: near, it glares terror to me.

ORES. Freeze not to stone, as seen the Gorgon's head.

PHRY. Let me not die; no Gorgon's head I know.

ORES. Fears a slave death, the end of all his ills?

PHRY. To slave or free sweet is the light of heav'n.

ORES. Well urg'd: thy wisdom saves thee: go thou in.

PHRY. Thou wilt not kill me then?

ORES. In safety go.

PHRY. Thy words breathe music.

ORES. But I may retract

This lenity.

PHRY. No music breathes in that.

ORES. Fool, if thou think'st thy blood shall stain my sword,

Nor Woman thou, nor in the scale of men.

To stop thy clamours came I: Argos soon

Is rous'd at every noise. For Menelaus

We fear him not: our swords shall welcome him:

Let him then come, proud of his golden locks

That wanton o'er his shoulders. Should he raise

The men of Argos, and for Helen's death

Lead them against this house, and menace me,

My sister, and my friend, he shall behold

His daughter, with his wife, weltring in blood.

CHORUS.

1st SEM. Other horrors, other woes

Rise this royal house t' enclose.

2d SEM. Haste we then to spread th' alarm,

Or keep silence, shunning harm?

1st SEM. See the sudden smoke arise,

Waving tidings to the skies!

2d SEM. From the torch that dusky wreath

Threatens ruin, flames; and death.

CHOR. What event the gods assign,

Mortal, to submit is thine.
 Here some stern relentless pow'r
 Bade the horrid ruin roar,
 When the blood-stain'd car beneath
 Myrtilus lay roll'd in death.

But see, with hasty step the Spartan comes,
 Inform'd, belike, of these rough deeds of death.
 Quick, quick, ye royal youths, make fast these gates,
 Prevent the foe; for to th' unfortunate,
 Like thee, Orestes, dreadful are the wrongs
 Of insolent and rude prosperity.

MENELAUS *below*, ORESTES, PYLADES, ELECTRA,
 HERMIONE *above*, CHORUS.

MEN. I heard the horrid and atrocious deeds
 Of these two lions, Men I call them not;
 My wife not dead, I hear, but disappear'd.
 'This idle rumour I receiv'd from one,
 Bewilder'd with his fears; the bitter scoff,
 The artifice of him that slew his mother.
 Open the gates here: slaves, I speak to you,
 Unbar the gates, that I at least may save
 My daughter from their bloody hands, and bear
 My poor lost wife away, whose murderers
 This vengeful hand should recompense with death.

ORES. Stand off; forbear: Spartan, I speak to thee
 Tow'ring in pride: dare but to touch the gate,
 I will rend down this ancient pinnacle
 That crowns the battlements, and crush thy head.
 The gates are shut, and barricadoed strong,
 To guard me from thy efforts, and thy friends'.

MEN. Ha! what is this? What mean these blazing torches?
 Why on the battlements this station fix'd?
 Why at my daughter's bosom points that sword?

ORES. Is it thy will to question, or to hear me?

MEN. Neither: but by compulsion I must hear thee.

ORES. Be thou assur'd, thy daughter I will kill.

MEN. Thou hast kill'd Helen: wilt thou shed more blood?

- ORES. Would I had kill'd her, nor the gods beguil'd me!
MEN. Her murder dost thou tauntingly deny?
ORES. With sorrow I deny it: 'twas my wish.
MEN. What to have done? Thy words excite my fear.
ORES. To sacrifice this baleful pest of Greece.
MEN. Give me the body, that I may entomb it.
ORES. Ask of the gods: but I will kill thy daughter.
MEN. The mother slain, wilt thou add blood to blood?
ORES. T' avenge my father; yet betray'd by thee.
MEN. Art thou not sated with thy mother's blood?
ORES. Never, with punishing such impious women.
MEN. And art thou, Pylades, accomplice with him?
ORES. His silence speaks: sufficient my reply.
MEN. But short thy joy, unless thou fly on wings.
ORES. We will not fly: but we will fire the house.
MEN. Thy father's royal seat in ruins sink!
ORES. That it may ne'er be thine: and at the flames
Her will I sacrifice.
- MEN. Aye, kill her, do;
I will have vengeance, ample vengeance on thee.
ORES. Thus then.
- MEN. Ah, stay thee: do not, do not kill her!
ORES. Be silent now, and with composure bear
'Th' afflictions, which with justice light on thee.
- MEN. What, is it justice then that thou shou'dst live?
ORES. Live! Aye, and reign.
- MEN. Where wou'dst thou reign?
ORES. In Argos,
Pelasgian Argos.
- MEN. At the sacred rites
Well would those hands the cleansing lavers touch.
ORES. And wherefore not?
- MEN. And, e'er the spear is rais'd,
Offer the hallow'd victim!
- ORES. Dost not thou?
MEN. And well: my hands are pure.
ORES. But not thy heart.
MEN. Who will hold converse with thee?

ORES.

His father.

He that loves

MEN.

He too, who reveres his mother?

ORES.

Happy his state.

MEN.

Unhappy then is thine.

ORES.

Because such impious women I abhor.

MEN.

Take, from my daughter's bosom take thy sword.

ORES.

False are thy words.

MEN.

My daughter wilt thou kill?

ORES.

Now thou speak'st truth.

MEN.

Ah me, what shall I do?

ORES.

Go to the Argives, and persuade them—

MEN.

What

Shall I persuade them?

ORES.

Ask the state to spare

Our lives.

MEN.

Or you will kill my daughter?

ORES.

Aye.

MEN.

Unhappy Helen!

ORES.

Am not I unhappy?

MEN.

From Troy I brought thee to be butcher'd here.

ORES.

Would it were so!

MEN.

After a thousands toils—

ORES.

But not for me.

MEN.

These dreadful ills fall on me.

ORES.

Thou hadst no will to serve me.

MEN.

Thou hast caught me.

ORES.

No: by thy baseness thou hast caught thyself.

But go, Electra, fire the house below:

And thou, my Pylades, my faithful friend,

Set from these battlements the roof on fire.

MEN.

Arm, arm, ye sons of Greece; ye warlike Argives,

Fly to my aid. Despair of life, and guilt

Stain'd with his mother's blood, prompt his bold hand

In one wide ruin to involve the city.

APOLLO.

Cease, Menelaus, forbear this fiery rage:

Apollo speaks: revere the present god.
And thou, Orestes, whose uplifted sword
Threatens that virgin's life, forbear, and hear.
Her whom thy rage, to work him woe, assail'd,
This radiant form in tissued clouds enshrin'd,
Snatch'd from thy sword I sav'd; such the command
Of heav'n's high king: his beauteous progeny
Soars above mortal fate, and orb'd in heav'n
Immortal 'midst her kindred stars she shines,
Beaming kind influence on the mariners.
Lead to thy royal house another wife;
Since by her beauty the just gods awoke
'Twixt Greece and 'Troy the rage of war, to free
The groaning earth from impious multitudes.
Such is the fate of Helen. Thou, Orestes,
Quitting this country, in Parrhasia's plains
For one revolving year thy dwelling fix,
And give the place thy name; that honour share
With Azan and with Arcas. Pass from thence
To Athens; there against the Furies urge
Thy plea, acquit thee of thy mother's blood:
There in that awful court the gods shall sit
Thy judges; and thy just cause shall prevail.
Her, at whose throat thy angry sword was pointed,
The gods decree thy wife; though Pyrrhus dreams
Of nuptial joys, the Delphic sword awaits him;
My vengeance on Achilles this demands.
To Pylades thy sister is betroth'd;
Give him his bride: and happiness attends
To pour her blessings on their future years.
Thou, Menelaus, yield that Orestes reign
At Argos: haste to Sparta, reign thou there,
And wear that crown, the dow'ry of thy wife,
The well-earn'd meed of all the toils she caus'd thee.
It shall be mine t' appease the state to him,
Compell'd by my command to slay his mother.

ORES. Thou god of oracles, prophet of good,
True are thy words, and faithful. Yet my soul

Was struck with horror, lest some vengeful pow'r
 Spoke this, which I misdeem'd thy voice divine.
 But all is well. Obedient to thy word
 I drop the sword: and, if her father gives her,
 Wish to receive Hermione my bride.

MEN. [Daughter of Jove, bright Helen, hail! thy state
 'Midst the blest mansions of th' immortal gods
 I reverence. Now, Orestes, give I thee
 My daughter, at the bidding of the god.
 Illustrious in thy race thou takest a wife
 Not less illustrious: blessings on thy hand
 That takes her, and on mine that gives her to thee.

APOL. Each now depart, as I commanded: cease
 Your strife.

MEN. T' obey is ours.

ORES. Such are my thoughts.

Now, Menelaus, to all these evils past
 My soul speaks peace; and to thy oracles.

APOL. Go then your ways, now go, and reverence Peace,
 Most beauteous of the gods. I will conduct
 Th' immortal Helen to the house of Jove
 O'er yon star-spangled sky, to the bright seats
 Where, with majestic Juno, and the bloom
 Of Hebe ever young, Alcides' joy,
 A goddess she shall hear the vows of mortals;
 And honour'd with the twin-born sons of Jove
 Guide the tost mariners, and rule the sea.

CHOR. O victory, I revere thy sober triumphs:
 Thus ever guard, thus ever crown my life!



IPHIGENIA IN TAURIS.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

IPHIGENIA

ORESTES

PYLADES

THOAS

HERDSMAN

MESSENGER

CHORUS of GRECIAN WOMEN, CAPTIVES,

Attendants on Iphigenia in the Temple.

IPHIGENIA IN TAURIS.

THE reader will doubtless be pleased at renewing his acquaintance with the amiable but unhappy Iphigenia: from the altar of Diana at Aulis she was removed by that goddess to her temple in the Tauric Chersonese, a great Peninsula in the Black Sea on the Mæotic Lake, now called Crim Tartary, where she presided as priestess over the cruel and bloody rites there established.

Diodorus Siculus, lib. iv. informs us, “that it was
“the custom of the Barbarians, who inhabited that
“country, to sacrifice such strangers, as were driven
“on that shore, to the Tauric Diana. Iphigenia, they
“say, was in after times appointed the priestess of
“this goddess, and sacrificed such strangers as were
“taken. In tracing the history of these sacrifices we
“find that the Sun was father of Æetes and Perses:
“Æetes reigned at Colchis, Perses in the Tauric
“Chersonese, both remarkable for their savage cruelty.
“Hecate was the daughter of Perses, and exceeded her
“father in daring and atrocious actions: she took
“great delight in hunting, and when she failed of
“success in the chase, transfixed men with her arrows,
“instead of beasts. She was fond of preparing com-
“positions of a poisonous nature; to try the force of
“which, she mixed them with the food given to
“strangers. Having acquired great experience in

“ these things, she destroyed her father with poison, “ and took possession of his kingdom : she then built “ the temple of Diana, and appointed that the strang- “ ers, who arrived there, should be sacrificed to the “ goddess : hence her name became terrible for her “ barbarity. She afterwards married Æetes, and was “ by him the mother of Circe and Medea.” Iphi- genia had for some years, reluctantly indeed but through necessity, presided over these inhuman rites, when Orestes, with his friend Pylades, arrived on this inhospitable coast, in obedience to the oracle of Apollo : they were seized, and carried to the king, who sent them in chains to the priestess as victims to the goddess : their death now seemed inevitable. The drama is conducted with exquisite skill, and the circumstances arise out of each other so naturally, that, as P. Brumoy well observes, the piece has such an air of truth, that the spectator is persuaded that the event really passed as it is presented to him, and that it could not have passed in any other manner.

The translator feels himself in a very unpleasant situation with regard to this tragedy : the justly approved translation of the late excellent Mr. West rendered his attempt unnecessary ; he had no ambition to rival that gentleman, nor has he the vanity to hope for any superiority in the execution of the work : but the respect due to his Subscribers, and to the public, obliged him to present them with *All* the tragedies of Euripides, though at the hazard of his reputation in this particular instance, where non vinci opimus est triumphus.

The Scene is in the Court of the temple of Diana.

IPHIGENIA IN TAURIS.

IPH. **T**O Pisa by the fleetest coursers borne
Comes Pelops, son of Tantalus, and weds
The virgin daughter of CENOMAUUS:
From her sprung Atreus; Menelaus from him,
And Agamemnon; I from him derive
My birth, his Iphigenia, by his queen
Daughter of Tyndarus. Where frequent winds
Swell the vext Euripus with eddying blasts,
And roll the dark'ning waves, my father slew me
A victim to Diana, so he thought,
For Helen's sake, its bay where Aulis winds
To fame well known, for there his thousand ships,
The armament of Greece, th' imperial chief
Conven'd, desirous that his Greeks should snatch
The glorious crown of victory from Troy,
And punish the base insult to the bed
Of Helen, vengeance grateful to the soul
Of Menelaus. But 'gainst his ships the sea
Long barr'd, and not one fav'ring breeze to swell
His flagging sails, the hallowed flames the chief
Consults, and Calchas thus disclos'd the fates,
"Imperial leader of the Grecian host,
"Hence shalt thou not unmoor thy vessels, e'er
"Diana as a victim shall receive
"Thy daughter Iphigenia: what the year
"Most beauteous should produce thou to the queen
"Dispensing light didst vow to sacrifice:

“ A daughter Clytemnestra in thy house
“ Then bore; (the peerless grace of beauty thus
“ To me assigning;) her must thou devote
“ The victim.” Then Ulysses by his arts
Me, to Achilles as design’d a bride,
Won from my mother. My unhappy fate
To Aulis brought me; on the altar there
High was I placed, and o’er me gleam’d the sword
Aiming the fatal wound: but from the stroke
Diana snatch’d me, in exchange an hind
Giving the Grecians, through the lucid air
Me she convey’d to Tauris, here to dwell,
Where o’er barbarians a barbaric king
Holds his rude sway, named Thoas, whose swift foot
Equals the rapid wing: me he appoints
The priestess of this temple, where such rites
Are pleasing to Diana, that the name
Alone claims honour; for I sacrifice
(Such, e’er I came, the custom of the state)
Whatever Grecian to this savage shore
Is driven; the previous rites are mine; the deed
Of blood, too horrid to be told, devolves
On others in the temple: but the rest,
In reverence to the goddess, I forbear.
But the strange visions, which the night now past
Brought with it, to the air, if that may sooth
My troubled thought, I will relate. I seem’d,
As I lay sleeping, from this land remov’d
To dwell at Argos, resting on my couch
’Midst the apartments of the virgin train:
Sudden the firm earth shook: I fled, and stood
Without; the battlements I saw, and all
The rocking roof fall from its lofty height
In ruins to the ground: of all the house,
My father’s house, one pillar, as I thought,
Alone was left, which from its cornice wav’d
A length of auburn locks, and human voice
Assum’d: the bloody office, which is mine

To strangers here, respecting, I to death,
 Sprinkling the lustral drops, devoted it
 With many tears. My dream I thus expound.
 Orestes, whom I hallow'd by my rites,
 Is dead: for sons are pillars of the house,
 They, whom my lustral lavers sprinkle, die.
 I cannot to my friends apply my dream,
 For Strophius, when I perish'd, had no son.
 Now to my brother, absent though he be,
 Libations will I offer: this at least,
 With the attendants giv'n me by the king,
 Virgins of Greece, I can: but what the cause
 They yet attend me not within the house,
 The temple of the goddess where I dwell?

ORESTES, PYLADES.

ORES. Keep careful watch, lest some one come this way.

PYL. I watch, and turn mine eye to every part.

ORES. And dost thou, Pylades, imagine this
 The temple of the goddess, which we seek,
 Our sails from Argos sweeping o'er the main?

PYL. Orestes, such my thought, and must be thine.

ORES. And this the altar wet with Grecian blood?

PYL. Crimson'd with gore behold its sculptur'd wreaths.

ORES. See, from the battlements what trophies hang!

PYL. The spoils of strangers that have here been slain.

ORES. Behoves us then to watch with careful eye.

O Phœbus, by thy oracles again
 Why hast thou led me to these toils? E'er since
 In vengeance for my father's blood I slew
 My mother, ceaseless by the Furies driv'n,
 Vagrant, an outcast, many a bending course
 My feet have trod: to thee I came, of thee
 Inquir'd this whirling frenzy by what means,
 And by what means my labours I might end.
 Thy voice commanded me to speed my course
 To this wild coast of Tauris, where a shrine
 Thy sister hath, Diana; thence to take

The statue of the goddess, which from heav'n,
 So say the natives, to this temple fell:
 This image or by fraud or fortune won,
 The dangerous toil achiev'd, to place the prize
 In the Athenian land: no more was said;
 But that performing this I should obtain
 Rest from my toils. Obedient to thy words
 On this unknown, unhospitable coast
 Am I arriv'd. Now, Pylades, for thou
 Art my associate in this dangerous task,
 Of thee I ask, What shall we do? for high
 The walls, thou seest, which fence the temple round:
 Shall we ascend their height? But how escape
 Observing eyes? Or burst the brazen bars?
 Of these we nothing know: in the attempt
 To force the gates, or meditating means
 To enter, if detected, we shall die.
 Shall we then, e'er we die, by flight regain
 The ship, in which we hither plough'd the sea?
 Of flight we brook no thought, nor such hath been
 Our wont; nor may the god's commanding voice
 Be disobey'd: but from the temple now
 Retiring, in some cave, which the black sea
 Beats with its billows, we may lie conceal'd
 At distance from our bark, lest some, whose eyes
 May note it, bear the tidings to the king,
 And we be seiz'd by force. But when the eye
 Of night comes darkling on, then must we dare,
 And take the polish'd image from the shrine,
 Attempting all things: and the vacant space
 Between the triglyphs, mark it well, enough
 Is open to admit us; by that way
 Attempt we to descend: in toils the brave
 Are daring; of no worth the abject soul.
 This length of sea we plough'd not from this coast,
 Nothing effected, to return: but well

PYL.

ORES.

Hast thou advis'd; the god must be obey'd.
 Retire we then where we may lie conceal'd:
 For never from the god will come the cause
 That what his sacred voice commands should fall
 Effectless. We must dare. No toil to youth
 Excuse, which justifies inaction, brings.

IPHIGENIA, CHORUS.

IPH. You, who your savage dwellings hold
 Nigh this inhospitable main
 'Gainst clashing rocks with fury roll'd,
 From all but hallow'd words abstain.
 Virgin queen, Latona's grace,
 Joying in the mountain chase,
 To thy court, thy rich domain,
 To thy beauteous-pillar'd fane,
 Where our wond'ring eyes behold
 Battlements that blaze with gold,
 Thus my virgin steps I bend,
 Holy, the holy to attend,
 Servant, virgin queen, to thee,
 Pow'r, who bear'st life's golden key,
 Far from Greece for steeds renown'd,
 From her walls with towers crown'd,
 From the beauteous-planted meads
 Where his train Eurotas leads,
 Visiting the lov'd retreats
 Once my royal father's seats.

CHOR. I come. What cares disturb thy rest?
 Why hast thou brought me to the shrine?
 Doth some fresh grief afflict thy breast?
 Why bring me to this seat divine?
 Thou daughter of that chief, whose pow'rs
 Plough'd with a thousand keels the strand,
 And rang'd in arms shook Troy's proud tow'rs
 Beneath th' Atridæ's great command!

IPH.

O ye attendant train,
How is my heart oppress'd with woe !
What notes, save notes of grief, can flow,
An harsh and unmelodious strain ?
My soul domestic ills oppress with dread,
And bid me mourn a brother dead.
What visions did my sleeping sense appal
In the past dark and midnight hour ?
'Tis ruin, ruin all.
My father's house—it is no more;
No more is his illustrious line.
What dreadful deeds hath Argos known !
One only brother, Fate, was mine ;
And dost thou rend him from me ? Is he gone
To Pluto's dreary realms below ?
For him, as dead, with pious care
This goblet I prepare ;
And on the bosom of the earth shall flow
Streams from the heifer mountain-bred,
The grape's rich juice, and mix'd with these
The labour of the yellow bees,
Libations soothing to the dead.
Give me th' oblation ; let me hold
The foaming goblet's hallow'd gold.

O thou, the earth beneath,
Who didst from Agamemnon spring,
To thee depriv'd of vital breath
I these libations bring.
Accept them : to thy honour'd tomb
Never, ah ! never shall I come ;
Never these golden tresses bear
To place them there, there shed the tear :
For from my country far, an hind
There deem'd as slain, my wild abode I find.
To thee thy faithful train
The Asiatic hymn will raise,
A doleful, a barbaric strain,

CHOR.

IPH.

Responsive to thy lays,
And steep in tears the mournful song,
Notes, which to the dead belong;
Dismal notes attun'd to woe
By Pluto in the realms below :
No sprightly air shall we employ
To cheer the soul, and wake the sense of joy.
Th' Atridæ are no more :
Extinct their sceptre's golden light;
My father's house from its proud height
Is fall'n : its ruins I deplore.
Who of her kings at Argos holds his reign,
Her kings once blest ? But Sorrow's train
Rolls on impetuous for the rapid steeds
Which o'er the strand with Pelops fly.
From what atrocious deeds
Starts the sun back, his sacred eye
Of brightness, loathing, turn'd aside ?
And fatal to their house arose
From the rich Ram, Thessalia's golden pride,
Slaughter on slaughter, woes on woes.
Thence from the dead of ages past
Vengeance came rushing on its prey,
And swept the race of Tantalus away :
Fatal to thee its ruthless haste ;
To me too fatal from the hour
My mother wedded, from the night
She gave me to life's opening light,
Nurs'd by affliction's cruel pow'r.
Early to me the fates unkind
To know what sorrow is assign'd :
Me Leda's daughter, hapless dame,
First blooming offspring of her bed,
(A father's conduct here I blame,)
A joyless victim bred ;
When o'er the strand of Aulis, in the pride
Of beauty kindling flames of love,
High on my splendid car I move,

Betroth'd to Thetis' son a bride :
 Ah hapless bride, to all the train
 Of Grecian fair preferr'd in vain !
 But now a stranger on this strand,
 'Gainst which the wild waves beat,
 I hold my dreary, joyless seat,
 Far distant from my native land,
 Nor nuptial bed is mine, nor child, nor friend.
 At Argos now no more I raise
 The festal song in Juno's praise ;
 Nor o'er the loom sweet-sounding bend,
 As the creative shuttle flies,
 Give forms of Titans fierce to rise,
 And dreadful with her purple spear
 Image Athenian Pallas there.
 But on this barb'rous shore
 Th' unhappy stranger's fate I moan,
 The ruthless altar stain'd with gore,
 His deep and dying groan :
 And for each tear that weeps his woes,
 From me a tear of pity flows.
 Of these the sad remembrance now must sleep :
 A brother dead, ah me ! I weep :
 At Argos him by fate opprest
 I left an infant at the breast,
 A beauteous bud, whose opening charms
 'Then blossom'd in his mother's arms,
 Orestes, born to high command,
 Th' imperial sceptre of the Argive land.

CHOR. Leaving the sea-wash'd shore an herdsman comes
 Speeding, with some fresh tidings to thee fraught.

HERDSMAN, IPHIGENIA, CHORUS.

HERD. Daughter of Agamemnon, and bright gem
 Of Clytemnestra, hear strange things from me.

IPH. And what of terror doth thy tale import ?

HERD. Two youths, swift-rowing 'twixt the clashing rocks
 Of our wild sea, are landed on the beach ;

A grateful offering at Diana's shrine,
And victims to the goddess. Haste, prepare
The sacred lavers, and the previous rites.

IPH. Whence are the strangers? from what country named?

HERD. From Greece: this only, nothing more, I know.

IPH. Didst thou not hear what names the strangers bear?

HERD. One by the other was call'd Pylades.

IPH. How is the stranger, his companion, named?

HERD. This none of us can tell: we heard it not.

IPH. How saw you them? how seiz'd them? by what chance?

HERD. 'Midst the rude cliffs that o'er the Euxine hang——

IPH. And what concern have herdsmen with the sea?

HERD. To wash our herds in the salt wave we came.

IPH. To what I ask'd return: how seiz'd you them?

Tell me the manner; this I wish to know.

For slow the victims come, nor hath some while

The altar of the goddess, as was wont,

Been crimson'd with the streams of Grecian blood.

HERD. Our herds, which in the forests feed, we drove

Amidst the tide that rushes to the shore

'Twixt the Symplegades: it was the place

Where in the rifted rock the chafing surge

Hath hollow'd a rude cave, the haunt of those

Whose quest is purple. Of our number there

An herdsman saw two youths, and back return'd

With soft and silent step; then, pointing, said,

Do you not see them? These are deities

That sit there. One, who with religious awe

Rever'd the gods, with hands uplifted pray'd,

His eyes fix'd on them, " Son of the sea-nymph

" Leucothoe, guardian of the lab'ring bark,

" Our lord Palæmon, be propitious to us!

" Or sit you on our shores, bright sons of Jove,

" Castor and Pollux? Or the glorious boast

" Of Nereus, father of the noble choir

" Of fifty Nereids?" One, whose untaught mind

298. This is said to prevent suspicion: her former quickness to the herdsmen might, she feared, discover her abhorrence of the rites.

Audacious folly harden'd 'gainst the sense
Of holy awe, scoff'd at his pray'rs, and said,
These are wreck'd mariners, that take their seat
In the cleft rock through fear, as they have heard
Our prescrib'd rite, that here we sacrifice
The stranger. To the greater part he seem'd
Well to have spoken, and we judg'd it meet
To seize the victims, by our country's law
Due to the goddess. Of the stranger youths
One at this instant started from the rock;
Awhile he stood, and wildly toss'd his head,
And groan'd, his loose arms trembling all their length,
Convuls'd with madness: as an hunter loud
Then cried, Dost thou behold her, Pylades,
Dost thou not see this dragon fierce from hell
Rushing to kill me, and against me rousing
Her horrid vipers? See this other here,
Emitting fire and slaughter from her vests,
Sails on her wings, my mother in her arms
Bearing, to hurl this mass of rock upon me!
Ah, she will kill me! whither shall I fly?
His visage might we see no more the same,
And his voice varied, now the roar of bulls,
The howl of dogs now uttering, mimic sounds
Sent by the madd'ning Furies, as they say.
Together thronging, as of death assur'd,
We sit in silence: but he drew his sword,
And like a lion rushing 'midst our herds
Plung'd in their sides the weapon, weening thus
To drive the Furies, till the briny wave
Foam'd with their blood. But when among our herds
We saw this havoc made, we all 'gan rouse
To arms, and blew our sounding shells t' alarm
The neighb'ring peasants; for we thought in fight
Rude herdsmen to these youthful strangers, train'd
To arms, ill match'd; and forthwith to our aid
Flock'd numbers. But, his frenzy of its force
Abating, on the earth the stranger falls,

Foam bursting from his mouth: but when we saw
 Th' advantage, each adventur'd on, and hurl'd
 What might annoy him fall'n: the other youth
 Wiped off the foam, took of his person care,
 His fine-wrought robe spread over him, with heed
 The flying stones observing warded off
 The wounds, and each kind office to his friend
 Attentively perform'd. His sense return'd,
 The stranger started up, and soon perceiv'd
 The tide of foes that roll'd impetuous on,
 The danger and distress that clos'd them round:
 He heav'd a sigh; an unremitting storm
 Of stones we pour'd, and each incited each:
 Then we his dreadful exhortation heard,
 Pylades, we shall die; but let us die
 With glory; draw thy sword, and follow me.
 But when we saw the enemies advance [wood
 With brandish'd swords, the steep heights crown'd with
 We fill in flight: but others, if one flies,
 Press on them; if again they drive these back,
 What before fled turns, with a storm of stones
 Assaulting them; but, what exceeds belief,
 Hurl'd by a thousand hands not one could hit
 The victims of the goddess: scarce at length,
 Not by brave daring seiz'd we them, but 'round
 We closed upon them, and their swords with stones
 Beat, wily, from their hands, for on their knees
 They through fatigue had sunk upon the ground:
 We bare them to the monarch of this land:
 He view'd them, and without delay to thee
 Sent them devoted to the cleansing vase,
 And to the altar. Victims such as these,
 O virgin, wish to find; for if such youths
 Thou offer, for thy slaughter Greece will pay,
 Her wrongs to thee at Aulis well aveng'd.

CHOR. These things are wonderful, which thou hast told
 Of him, whoe'er he be, the youth from Greece
 Arriv'd on this unhospitable shore.

IPH. 'Tis well: go thou, and bring the strangers hither.
What here is to be done shall be our care.
O my unhappy heart! before this hour
To strangers thou wast gentle, always touch'd
With pity, and with tears their tears repaid,
When Grecians, natives of my country, came
Into my hands: but from the dreams, which prompt
To deeds ungentle, shewing that no more
Orestes views the sun's fair light, whoe'er
Ye are that hither come, me will you find
Relentless now. This is the truth, my friends:
My heart is rent: and never will the wretch,
Who feels affliction's cruel tortures, bear
Good will to those that are more fortunate.
Never came gale from Jove, nor flying bark,
Which 'twixt the dang'rous rocks of th' Euxine sea
Brought Helen hither, who my ruin wrought,
Nor Menelaus; that on them my foul wrongs
I might repay, and with an Aulis here
Requite the Aulis there, where I was seiz'd,
And, as an heifer, by the Grecians slain;
My father too, who gave me birth, was priest.
Ah me! the sad remembrance of those ills
Yet lives: how often did I stroke thy cheek,
And, hanging on thy knees, address thee thus,
Alas, my father! I by thee am led
A bride to bridal rites unblest and base:
Them, whilst by thee I bleed, my mother hymns,
And th' Argive dames, with hymeneal strains,
And with the jocund pipe the house resounds:
But at the altar I by thee am slain;
For Pluto was th' Achilles, not the son
Of Peleus, whom to me thou didst announce
Th' affianc'd bridegroom, and by guile didst bring
To bloody nuptials in the rolling car.
But, o'er mine eyes the veil's fine texture spread,
This brother in my hands, who now is lost,
I clasp'd not, though his sister, did not press

My lips to his, through virgin modesty,
 As going to the house of Peleus: then
 Each fond embrace I to another time
 Deferr'd, as soon to Argos to return.
 If, O unhappy brother, thou art dead,
 From what a state, thy father's envied height
 Of glory, lov'd Orestes, art thou torn!—
 These false rules of the goddess much I blame:
 Whoe'er of mortals is with slaughter stain'd,
 Or hath at child-birth giv'n assisting hands,
 Or chanc'd to touch aught dead, she as impure
 Drives from her altars; yet herself delights
 In human victims bleeding at her shrine.
 Ne'er did Latona, from th' embrace of Jove,
 Bring forth such inconsistency: I then deem
 The feast of Tantalus, where gods were guests,
 Unworthy of belief, as that they fed
 On his son's flesh delighted: and I think
 These people, who themselves have a wild joy
 In shedding human blood, their savage guilt
 Charge on the goddess: for this truth I hold,
 None of the gods is evil, or doth wrong.

CHORUS.

STRO. 1. Ye rocks, ye clashing rocks, whose brow
 Frowns o'er the darken'd deeps below,
 Whose wild inhospitable wave,
 From Argos flying and her native spring,
 The virgin once was known to brave,
 Tormented with the Bryze's madd'ning sting,
 From Europe when the rude sea o'er
 She pass'd to Asia's adverse shore:
 Who are these hapless youths, that dare to land,
 Leaving those soft irriguous meads,
 Where, his green margin fring'd with reeds
 Eurotas rolls his ample tide,

- Or Dirce's hallow'd waters glide,
 And touch this barb'rous, stranger-hating strand,
 The altars where a virgin dew,
 And blood the pillar'd shrine imbrues?
- STRO. 2. Did they with oars impetuous sweep,
 Rank answering rank, the foamy deep,
 And wing their bark with flying sails,
 To raise their humble fortune their desire,
 Eager to catch the rising gales,
 Their bosoms with the love of gain on fire?
 For sweet is Hope, to man's fond breast,
 The hope of gain, insatiate guest,
 Though on her oft attends Misfortune's train;
 For daring man she tempts to brave
 The dangers of the boist'rous wave,
 And leads him heedless of his fate
 Through many a distant, barb'rous state;
 Vain his opinions, his pursuits are vain!
 Boundless o'er some her pow'r is shewn,
 But some her temp'rate influence own.
- ANTIS. 1. How did they pass the dang'rous rocks
 Clashing with rude, tremendous shocks?
 How pass the savage-howling shore
 Where once th' unhappy Phineus held his reign,
 And sleep affrighted flies its roar,
 Steering their rough course o'er this boist'rous main,
 Form'd in a ring beneath whose waves
 The Nereid train in high-arch'd caves
 Weave the light dance, and raise the sprightly song,
 Whilst whisp'ring in their swelling sails
 Soft Zephyrs breathe, or southern gales
 Piping amidst their tackling play,
 As their bark ploughs its wat'ry way
 Those hoary cliffs, the haunts of birds, along,

490. The story of Phineus is well known from the writers of the Argonautic expedition. Virgil just mentions it in his account of the Harpies. He dwelt near the Thracian Salmydessus. *Nat. Com.*

500. This rocky island, called Leucas, rises over against the Tauric Chersonese.

- To that wild strand, the rapid race
Where once Achilles deign'd to grace ?
- ANTIS. 2. Oh that from Troy some chance would bear
Leda's lov'd daughter, fatal fair,
(The royal virgin's vows are mine,)

That her bright tresses roll'd in crimson dew,
Her warm blood flowing at this shrine
The altar of the goddess might imbrue,
And Vengeance, righteous to repay
Her former mischiefs, seize her prey !
But with what rapture should I hear his voice,
If one this shore should reach from Greece,
And bid the toils of slav'ry cease !
Or might I in the hour of rest
With pleasing dreams of Greece be blest,
So in my house, my native land rejoice,
In sleep enjoy the pleasing strain
For happiness restor'd again !
- IPH. But the two youths, their hands fast bound in chains,
The late-seiz'd victims to the goddess, come.
Silence, my friends: for destin'd at the shrine
To bleed the Grecian strangers near approach :
And no false tidings did the herdsman bring.
- CHOR. Goddess rever'd, if grateful to thy soul
This state presents such sacrifice, accept
The victims, which the custom of this land
Gives thee, but deem'd unholy by the Greeks.

IPHIGENIA, ORESTES, PYLADES, CHORUS.

- IPH. No more: that to the goddess each due rite
Be well perform'd shall be my care. Unchain
The strangers' hands; that hallow'd as they are,
They may no more be bound. Go you, prepare
Within the temple what the rites require.
Unhappy youths, what mother brought you forth?
Your father who? Your sister, if perchance

Achilles celebrated some victory here with festive games: from him it was named
Achillea.

Ye have a sister, of what youths depriv'd?
For brother she shall have no more. Who knows
Whom such misfortunes may attend? For dark
What the gods will creeps on; and none can tell
The ills to come; this fortune from the sight
Obscures. But, O unhappy strangers, say
Whence came you? Sail'd you long since for this land
But long will be your absence from your homes,
For ever, in the dreary realms below.

ORES. Lady, whoe'er thou art, why for these things
Dost thou lament? why mourn for ills, which soon
Will fall on us? Him I esteem unwise,
Who, when he sees death near, tries to o'ercome
Its terrors with bewailings, without hope
Of safety: ill he adds to ill, and makes
His folly known, yet dies: we must give way
To fortune: therefore mourn not thou for us:
We know, we are acquainted with your rites.

IPH. Which of you by the name of Pylades
Is call'd? This first it is my wish to know.

ORES. If aught of pleasure that may give thee, He.

IPH. A native of what Grecian state, declare.

ORES. What profit, knowing this, wou'dst thou obtain?

IPH. And are you brothers, of one mother born?

ORES. Brothers by friendship, lady, not by birth.

IPH. To thee what name was by thy father giv'n?

ORES. With just cause I Unhappy might be call'd.

IPH. I ask not that: to fortune that ascribe.

ORES. Dying unknown rude scoffs I shall avoid.

IPH. Wilt thou refuse? Why are thy thoughts so high?

ORES. My body thou may'st kill, but not my name.

IPH. Wilt thou not say a native of what state?

ORES. The question nought avails, since I must die.

IPH. What hinders thee from granting me this grace?

ORES. Th' illustrious Argos I my country boast.

IPH. By the gods, stranger, is thy birth from thence?

ORES. My birth is from Mycenæ, once the blest.

IPH. Dost thou an exile fly, or by what fate?

ORES. Of my free will, in part not free, I fly.

IPH. Wilt thou then tell me what I wish to know?

ORES. Whate'er is foreign to my private griefs.

IPH. To my dear wish from Argos art thou come.

ORES. Not to my wish: but if to thine, enjoy it.

IPH. Troy, whose fame spreads so wide, perchance thou know'st.

ORES. Oh that I ne'er had known her, e'en in dreams!

IPH. They say she is no more, by war destroy'd.

ORES. It is so: you have heard no false reports.

IPH. Is Helena with Menelaus return'd?

ORES. She is: and one I love her coming rues.

IPH. Where is she? Me too she of old hath wrong'd.

ORES. At Sparta with her former lord she dwells.

IPH. By Greece, and not by me alone, abhorr'd!

ORES. I from her nuptials have my share of grief.

IPH. And are the Greeks, as fame reports, return'd?

ORES. How briefly all things dost thou ask at once?

IPH. This favour, e'er thou die, I wish t' obtain.

ORES. Ask then: since such thy wish; I will inform thee.

IPH. Calchas, a prophet, came he back from Troy?

ORES. He perish'd: at Mycenæ such the fame.

IPH. Goddess rever'd! But doth Ulysses live?

ORES. He lives, they say; but is not yet return'd.

IPH. Perish the wretch, nor see his country more!

ORES. Wish him not ill, for all with him is ill.

IPH. But doth the son of sea-born Thetis live?

ORES. He lives not: vain his nuptial rites at Aulis.

IPH. That all was fraud, as those, who felt it, say.

ORES. But who art thou, enquiring thus of Greece?

IPH. I am from thence, in early youth undone.

ORES. Thou hast a right t' enquire what there hath pass'd.

IPH. What know'st thou of the chief, men call the blest?

ORES. Who? Of the blest was not the chief I knew.

IPH. The royal Agamemnon, son of Atreus.

ORES. Of him I know not, lady; cease to ask.

IPH. Nay, by the gods, tell me, and cheer my soul.

ORES. He's dead, th' unhappy chief: no single ill.

IPH. Dead! By what adverse fate? Oh wretched me!

- ORES. Why mourn for this? How doth it touch thy breast?
- IPH. The glories of his former state I mourn.
- ORES. Dreadfully murder'd by a woman's hand.
- IPH. How wretched she that slew him, he thus slain!
- ORES. Now then forbear: of him enquire no more.
- IPH. This only; lives th' unhappy monarch's wife?
- ORES. She, lady, is no more, slain by her son.
- IPH. Alas the ruin'd house! What his intent?
- ORES. T' avenge on her his noble father slain.
- IPH. An ill, but righteous deed, how justly done!
- ORES. Though righteous, by the gods he is not blest.
- IPH. Hath Agamemnon other offspring left?
- ORES. He left one virgin daughter, nam'd Electra.
- IPH. Of her, that died a victim, is aught said?
- ORES. This only, dead she sees the light no more.
- IPH. Unhappy she! the father too, who slew her!
- ORES. For a bad woman she unseemly died.
- IPH. At Argos lives the murder'd father's son?
- ORES. No where he lives, poor wretch, and every where.
- IPH. False dreams, farewell: for nothing you import.
- ORES. Nor are those gods, that have the name of wise,
Less false than fleeting dreams. In things divine,
And in things human, great confusion reigns.
One thing is left; that, not unwise of soul,
Obedient to the prophet's voice he perish'd;
For that he perish'd they, who know, report.
- CHOR. What shall we know, what of our parents know?
If yet they live, or not, who can inform us?
- IPH. Hear me: this converse prompts a thought, which gives
Promise of good, ye youths of Greece, to you,
To these, and me: thus may it well be done,
If willing to my purpose all assent.
Wilt thou, if I shall save thee, go for me
A messenger to Argos, to my friends
Charg'd with a letter, which a captive wrote,
Who pitied me, nor murd'rous thought my hand,

But that he died beneath the law, these rites
The goddess deeming just? for from that hour
I have not found who might to Argos bear
Himself my message, back with life return'd,
Or send to any of my friends my letter.
Thou therefore, since it seems thou dost not bear
Ill will to me, and dost Mycenæ know,
And those I wish t' address, be safe, and live,
No base reward for a light letter life
Receiving: and let him, since thus the state
Requires, without thee to the goddess bleed.

ORES. Virgin unknown, well hast thou said in all
Save this, that to the goddess he should bleed
A victim; that were heavy grief indeed.
I steer'd the vessel to these ills, he sail'd
Attendant on my toils: to gain thy grace
By his destruction, and withdraw myself
From sufferings, were unjust: thus let it be;
Give him the letter; to fulfil thy wish
To Argos he will bear it: me let him,
Who claims that office, slay: base is his soul,
Who in calamities involves his friends,
And saves himself: this is a friend, whose life,
Dear to me as my own, I would preserve.

IPH. Excellent spirit! from some noble root
It shews thee sprung, and to thy friends a friend
Sincere: of those that share my blood if one
Remains, such may he be; for I am not
Without a brother, strangers, from my sight
Though distant now. Since then thy wish is such,
Him will I send to Argos, he shall bear
My letter, thou shalt die; for this desire
Hath strong possession of thy noble soul.

ORES. Who then shall do the dreadful deed, and slay me?

IPH. I: to atone the goddess is my charge.

ORES. A charge unenvied, Virgin, and unblest'd.

IPH. Necessity constrains: I must obey.

ORES. Wilt thou, a woman, plunge the sword in men?

- IPH. No: but thy locks to sprinkle round is mine.
 ORES. Whose then, if I may ask, the bloody deed?
 IPH. To some within the temple this belongs.
 ORES. What tomb is destin'd to receive my corse?
 IPH. The hallow'd fire within, and a dark cave.
 ORES. Oh that a sister's hand might wrap these limbs!
 IPH. Vain wish, unhappy youth, whoe'er thou art,
 Hast thou conceiv'd; for from this barbarous land
 Far is her dwelling. Yet of what my pow'r
 Permits, since thou from Argos draw'st thy birth,
 No grace will I omit; for in thy tomb
 I will place much of ornament, and pour
 The dulcet labour of the yellow bee,
 From mountain flow'rs extracted, on thy pyre.
 But I will go, and from the temple bring
 The letter: yet 'gainst me no hostile thought
 Conceive. You, that attend here, guard them well,
 But without chains. To one, whom most I love
 Of all my friends, to Argos I shall send
 Tidings perchance unlook'd for; and this letter,
 Declaring those, whom he thought dead, alive,
 Shall bear him an assur'd and solid joy.

PYLADES, ORESTES, CHORUS.

- CHOR. Thee, o'er whose limbs the bloody drops shall soon
 Be from the lavers sprinkled, I lament.
 ORES. This asks no pity, strangers: but farewell.
 CHOR. Thee, for thy happy fate we reverence, Youth,
 Who to thy country shalt again return.
 PYL. To friends unwish'd, who leave their friends to die.
 CHOR. Painful dismissal! Which shall I esteem
 Most lost, alas, alas, which most undone!
 For doubts my wav'ring judgment yet divide,
 If chief for thee my sighs should swell, or thee.
 ORES. By the gods, Pylades, is thy mind touch'd
 In manner like as mine?
 PYL. I cannot tell;
 Nor to thy question have I to reply.

ORES. Who is this virgin? With what zeal for Greece
 Made she enquiries of us what the toils
 At Troy, if yet the Grecians were return'd,
 And Calchas, from the flight of birds who form'd
 Presages of the future? And she nam'd
 Achilles: with what tenderness bewail'd
 Th' unhappy Agamemnon! of his wife
 She ask'd me, of his children: thence her race
 This unknown virgin draws, an Argive; else
 Ne'er would she send this letter, nor have wish'd
 To know these things, as if she bore a share,
 If Argos flourish, in its prosperous state.

PYL. Such were my thoughts, (but thou hast giv'n them words,
 Preventing me,) of every circumstance,
 Save one: the fate of kings all know, whose state
 Holds aught of rank. But pass to other thoughts.

ORES. What? Share them; so thou best may'st be inform'd.

PYL. That thou shou'dst die, and I behold this light,
 Were base: with thee I sail'd, with thee to die
 Becomes me; else shall I obtain the name
 Of a vile coward through the Argive state,
 And the deep vales of Phocis. Most will think,
 For most think ill, that by betraying thee
 I sav'd myself, home to return alone:
 Or haply that I slew thee, and thy death
 Contriv'd, that in the ruin of thy house
 Thy empire I might grasp, to me devolv'd
 As wedded to thy sister, now sole heir.
 These things I fear, and hold them infamous.
 Behoves me then with thee to die, with thee
 To bleed a victim, on the pyre with thine
 To give my body to the flames; for this
 Becomes me as thy friend, who dread reproach.

ORES. Speak more auspicious words: 'tis mine to bear
 Ills that are mine: and single when the woe,
 I would not bear it double. What thou say'st
 Is vile and infamous, would light on me,
 Should I cause thee to die, who in my toils

Hast borne a share: to me, who from the gods
 Suffer afflictions which I suffer, death
 Is not unwelcome: thou art happy, thine
 An unpolluted and a prosperous house;
 Mine impious and unblest: if thou art sav'd,
 And from my sister, whom I gave to thee
 Betroth'd thy bride, art bless'd with sons, my name
 May yet remain, nor all my father's house
 In total ruin sink. Go then, and live;
 Dwell in the mansion of thy ancestors.
 And when thou com'st to Greece, to Argos fam'd
 For warrior-steeds, by this right hand I charge thee
 Raise a sepulchral mound, and on it place
 A monument to me; and to my tomb
 Her tears, her tresses let my sister give:
 And say that by an Argive woman's hand
 I perish'd, to the altar's bloody rites
 An hallow'd victim. Never let thy soul
 Betray my sister, for thou seest her state
 Of friends how destitute, her father's house
 How desolate. Farewell. Of all my friends
 Thee have I found most friendly, from my youth
 Train'd up with me, in all my sylvan sports
 Thou dear associate, and through many toils
 Thou faithful partner of my miseries.
 Me Phœbus, though a prophet, hath deceiv'd,
 And meditating guile hath driv'n me far
 From Greece, of former oracles asham'd;
 To him resign'd, obedient to his words,
 I slew my mother, and my meed is death.
 PYL. Yes, I will raise thy tomb: thy sister's bed
 I never will betray, unhappy youth,
 For I will hold thee dearer when thou'rt dead,
 Than while thou livest; nor hath yet the voice
 Of Phœbus quite destroy'd thee, though thou stand
 To slaughter nigh: but sometimes mighty woes
 Yield mighty changes, so when fortune wills.
 ORES. Forbear: the words of Phœbus nought avail me;

For passing from the shrine the virgin comes.

IPHIGENIA, ORESTES, PYLADES, CHORUS.

IPH. Go * you away, and in the shrine prepare • to the Guards.
What those, who o'er the rites preside, require.—

Here, strangers, is the letter folded close :
What I would further, hear : the mind of man
In dangers, and again from fear reliev'd
Of safety when assur'd, is not the same :
I therefore fear lest he, who should convey
To Argos this epistle, when return'd
Safe to his native country will neglect
My letter, as a thing of little worth.

ORES. What wou'dst thou then ? What is thy anxious thought ?

IPH. This : let him give an oath that he will bear
To Argos this epistle to those friends
To whom it is my ardent wish to send it.

ORES. And wilt thou in return give him thy oath ?

IPH. That I will do, or will not do, say what.

ORES. To send him from this barbarous shore alive.

IPH. That's just : how should he bear my letter else ?

ORES. But will the monarch to these things assent ?

IPH. By me induc'd. Him I will see embark'd.

ORES. Swear then : and thou propose the righteous oath.

IPH. This, let him say, he to my friends will give.

PYL. Well : to thy friends this letter I will give.

IPH. Thee will I send safe through the dark'ning rocks.

PYL. What god dost thou invoke t' attest thy oath ?

IPH. Diana, at whose shrine high charge I hold.

PYL. And I heav'n's potent king, the awful Jove.

IPH. But if thou slight thy oath, and do me wrong ?

PYL. Never may I return. But if thou fail,
And save me not ?

IPH. Then never whilst I live
May I revisit my lov'd Argos more.

PYL. One thing, not mention'd, thy attention claims.

IPH. If honour owns it, this will touch us both.

PYL. Let me in this be pardon'd, if the bark

Be lost, and with it in the surging waves
 Thy letter perish, and I naked gain
 The shore, no longer binding be the oath.

IPH. Know'st thou what I will do? for various ills
 Arise to those that plough the dangerous deep.
 What in this letter is contain'd, what here
 Is written, all I will repeat to thee,
 That thou may'st bear my message to my friends.
 'Gainst danger thus I guard: if thou preserve
 The letter, that though silent will declare
 My purport: if it perish in the sea
 Saving thyself my words too thou wilt save.

PYL. Well hast thou said touching the gods and me.
 Say then, to whom at Argos shall I bear
 This letter? What relate as heard from thee?

IPH. This message to Orestes, to the son
 Of Agamemnon bear: She, who was slain
 At Aulis, Iphigenia, sends thee this:
 She lives, but not to those who then were there.

ORES. Where is she? From the dead return'd to life?

IPH. She whom thou seest: but interrupt me not.
 To Argos, O my brother, e'er I die
 Bear me from this barbaric land, and far
 Remove me from this altar's bloody rites,
 At which to slay the stranger is my charge.

ORES. What shall I say? Where are we, Pylades?

IPH. Or on thy house for vengeance will I call,
 Orestes.—Twice repeated, learn the name.

ORES. Ye gods!

IPH. In my cause why invoke the gods?

ORES. Nothing: proceed: my thoughts were wand'ring wide.
 Strange things of thee unask'd I soon shall learn.

IPH. Tell him the goddess sav'd me, in exchange
 An hind presenting, which my father slew
 A victim, deeming that he plung'd his sword
 Deep in my breast: me in this land she plac'd.
 Thou hast my charge; and this my letter speaks.

PYL. Oh thou hast bound me with an easy oath:

What I have sworn with honest purpose, long
Defer I not, but thus discharge mine oath.
To thee a letter from thy sister, lo,
I bear, Orestes; and I give it thee.

ORES. I do receive it, but forbear t' uncloset
Its foldings, greater pleasure first t' enjoy
Than words can give. My sister, O most dear,
Astonish'd e'en to disbelief I throw
Mine arms around thee with a fond embrace,
In transport at the wond'rous things I hear.

CHOR. Stranger, thou dost not well with hands profane
Thus to pollute the priestess of the shrine,
Grasping her garments hallow'd from the touch.

ORES. My sister, my dear sister, from one sire,
From Agamemnon sprung, turn not away,
Holding thy brother thus beyond all hope.

IPH. My brother! Thou my brother! Wilt thou not
Unsay these words? At Argos far he dwells.

ORES. Thy brother, O unhappy! is not there

IPH. Thee did the Spartan Tyndarus bring forth?

ORES. And from the son of Pelops' son I sprung.

IPH. What say'st thou? Canst thou give me proof of this?

ORES. I can: ask something of my father's house.

IPH. Nay, it is thine to speak, mine to attend.

ORES. First let me mention things which I have heard
Electra speak: to thee is known the strife
Which fierce 'twixt Atreus and Thyestes rose.

IPH. Yes, I have heard it; for the golden ram.

ORES. In the rich texture didst thou not inweave it?

IPH. O thou most dear! Thou windest near my heart.

ORES. And image in the web th' averted sun?

IPH. In the fine threads that figure did I work.

ORES. For Aulis did thy mother bathe thy limbs?

IPH. I know it, to unlucky spousals led.

ORES. Why to thy mother didst thou send thy locks?

IPH. Devoted for my body to the tomb.

ORES. What I myself have seen I now as proofs
Will mention. In thy father's house hung high

Within thy virgin chambers the old spear
Of Pelops, which he brandish'd when he slew
CEnomaus, and won his beauteous bride,
The virgin Hippodamia, Pisa's boast.

IPH. O thou most dear, for thou art he, most dear
Acknowledg'd, thee, Orestes, do I hold,
From Argos, from thy country distant far?

ORES. And hold I thee, my sister, long deem'd dead?
Grief mix'd with joy, and tears, not taught by woe
To rise, stand melting in thy eyes and mine.

IPH. Thee yet an infant in thy nurse's arms
I left, a babe I left thee in the house.
Thou art more happy, O my soul, than speech
Knows to express: what shall I say? 'tis all
Surpassing wonder and the pow'r of words.

ORES. May we together from this hour be blest!

IPH. An unexpected pleasure, O my friends,
Have I receiv'd; yet fear I from my hands
Lest to the air it fly. O sacred hearths
Rais'd by the Cyclops! O my country, lov'd
Mycenæ! Now that thou didst give me birth
I thank thee; now I thank thee that my youth
Thou trainedst, since my brother thou hast train'd,
A beam of light, the glory of his house.

ORES. We in our race are happy; but our life,
My sister, by misfortunes is unhappy.

IPH. I was, I know, unhappy, when the sword
My father, frenetic, pointed at my neck.

ORES. Ah me! methinks e'en now I see thee there.

IPH. When to Achilles, brother, not a bride
I to the sacrifice by guile was led,
And tears and groans the altar compass'd round.

ORES. Alas the lovers there!

IPH. I mourn'd the deed
My father dar'd; unlike a father's love,

914. δάκρυα ἰδάκρυα. v. 832. Markland.

935. Ἀχιλλῶος, εἰς θυρίαν, λείπτων. v. 857. Markland.

Cruel, unlike a father's love, to me.

ORES. Ill deeds succeed to ill; if thou hadst slain
Thy brother, by some god impell'd, what griefs
Must have been thine at such a dreadful deed!

IPH. Dreadful, my brother, oh how dreadful! Scarce
Hast thou escap'd a foul, unhallow'd death,
Slain by my hands. But how will these things end?
What fortune will assist me? What safe means
Shall I devise to send thee from this state,
From slaughter, to thy native land, to Argos,
fore E'er with thy blood the cruel sword be stain'd?
This to devise, O my unhappy soul!
This to devise is thine. Wilt thou by land,
Thy bark deserted, speed thy flight on foot?
Perils await thee 'midst these barbarous tribes
Through pathless wilds. And 'twixt the clashing rocks
Narrow the passage for the flying bark,
And long. Unhappy, ah unhappy me!
What god, what mortal, what unlook'd for chance

Will expedite our dangerous way, and shew
Two sprung from Atreus a release from ills?

CHOR. What having seen and heard I shall relate
Is marvellous, and passes fabling tales.

PYL. When after absence long, Orestes, friend
Meets friend, embraces will express their joy.
Behoves us now, bidding farewell to grief
And heedful to obtain the glorious name
Of safety, from this barbarous land to fly.
The wise, of fortune not regardless, seize
Th' occasion, and to happiness advance.

ORES. Well hast thou said; and Fortune here, I ween,
Will aid us: to the firm and strenuous mind
More potent works the influence divine.

IPH. Nothing shall check, nothing restrain my speech:
First will I question thee what fortune waits
Electra: this to know would yield me joy.

ORES. With * him she dwells, and happy is her life.

* Pointing to Pylades.

- IPH. Whence then is he? and from what father sprung?
- ORES. From Phocis: Strophius is his father nam'd.
- IPH. By Atreus' daughter to my blood allied?
- ORES. Nearly allied: my only faithful friend.
- IPH. He was not then, me when my father slew.
- ORES. Childless was Strophius for some length of time.
- IPH. O thou, the husband of my sister, hail!
- ORES. More than relation, my preserver too.
- IPH. But to thy mother why that dreadful deed?
- ORES. Of that no more: t' avenge my father's death.
- IPH. But for what cause did she her husband slay?
- ORES. Of her enquire not: thou wouldst blush to hear.
- IPH. The eyes of Argos now are rais'd to thee.
- ORES. There Menelaus is lord; I, outcast, fly.
- IPH. Hath he then wrong'd his brother's ruin'd house?
- ORES. Not so: the Furies fright me from the land.
- IPH. The madness this, which seiz'd thee on the shore?
- ORES. I was not first beheld unhappy there.
- IPH. Stern pow'rs; they haunt thee for thy mother's blood.
- ORES. And ruthless make me champ the bloody bit.
- IPH. Why to this region hast thou steer'd thy course?
- ORES. Commanded by Apollo's voice I come.
- IPH. With what intent? if that may be disclos'd.
- ORES. I will inform thee, though to length of speech
 This leads. When vengeance from my hands o'ertook
 My mother's deeds, foul deeds which let me pass
 In silence, by the Furies' fierce assaults
 To flight I was impell'd: to Athens then
 Apollo sent me, that, my cause there heard,
 I might appease the vengeful pow'rs, whose names
 May not be utter'd: the tribunal there
 Is holy, which for Mars when stain'd with blood
 Jove in old times establish'd. There arriv'd
 None willingly receiv'd me, by the gods
 As one abhorr'd; and they, who felt the touch
 Of shame, the hospitable board alone

Yielded, and though one common roof beneath,
 Their silence shewing they disdain'd to hold
 Converse with me, I took from them apart
 A lone repast; to each was plac'd a bowl
 Of the same measure; this they fill'd with wine,
 And bath'd their spirits in delight. Unmeet
 I deem'd it to express offence at those
 Who entertain'd me, but in silence griev'd,
 Shewing a cheer as though I mark'd it not,
 And sigh'd for that I shed my mother's blood.
 A feast, I hear, at Athens is ordain'd
 From this my evil plight, e'en yet observ'd,
 In which the equal-measur'd bowl then us'd
 Is by that people held in honour high.
 But when to the tribunal on the mount
 Of Mars I came, one stand I took, and one
 The eldest of the Furies opposite:
 The cause was heard touching my mother's blood,
 And Phœbus sav'd me by his evidence;
 Equal, by Pallas number'd, were the votes,
 And I from doom of blood victorious freed.
 Such of the Furies as there sate, pleas'd
 By the just sentence, nigh the court resolv'd
 To fix their seat; but others, whom the law
 Pleas'd not, with relentless tortures still
 Pursued me, till I reach'd the hallow'd soil
 Of Phœbus; stretch'd before his shrine I swore
 Foodless to waste my wretched life away,
 Unless the god, by whom I was undone,
 Would save me: from the golden tripod burst
 The voice divine, and sent me to this shore,
 Commanding me to bear the image hence,

1018. The βέθρον of Euripides must not be understood as a seat; Orestes says that he stood, ἵστην. Pausanias tells us they were *silver stones* on which the accuser and accused stood, the one of which had the appellation of Reproach, the other of Impudence, or of Innocence, for Adr. Junius reads ἀναιτίας instead of ἀναιδείας. Τοὺς δὲ ἀργυροῦς λίθους, ἐφ' ὧν ἱστᾶσιν ὅσαι δίκας ὑπὲρχουσι, καὶ οἱ διώκοντες, τὸν μὲν ὕβριως, τὸν δὲ ἀναιδείας αὐτοῖς ἐνομαζέουσιν. *Attic.*

Which fell from Jove, and in th' Athenian land
 To fix it: what th' oracular voice assign'd
 My safety, do thou aid: if we obtain
 The statue of the goddess, I no more
 With madness shall be tortur'd, but this arm
 Shall place thee in my bark, which ploughs the waves
 With many an oar, and to Mycenæ safe
 Bear thee again. Shew then a sister's love,
 O thou most dear, preserve thy father's house,
 Preserve me too; for me destruction waits,
 And all the race of Pelops, if we bear not
 This heav'n-descended image from the shrine.

CHOR. The anger of the gods hath rag'd severe,
 And plung'd the race of Tantalus in woes.

IPH. E'er thy arrival here, a fond desire
 To be again at Argos, and to see
 Thee, my lov'd brother, fill'd my soul. Thy wish
 Is my warm wish, to free thee from thy toils,
 And from its ruins raise my father's house;
 Nor harbour I 'gainst him, that slew me, thought
 Of harsh resentment: from thy blood my hands
 Would I keep pure, thy house I would preserve.
 But from the goddess how may this be hid?
 The tyrant too I fear, when he shall find
 The statue on its marble base no more.
 What then from death will save me? What excuse
 Shall I devise? Yet by one daring deed
 Might these things be achiev'd, cou'dst thou bear hence
 The image, me too in thy gallant bark
 Placing secure, how glorious were th' attempt!
 Me if thou join not with thee, I am lost
 Indeed; but thou, with prudent measures form'd,
 Return; I fly no danger, not e'en death,
 Be death requir'd, to save thee: no: the man
 Dying is mourn'd as to his house a loss;
 But woman's weakness is of light esteem.

ORES. I would not be the murderer of my mother,
 And of thee too; sufficient is her blood.

No; I will share thy fortune, live with thee,
 Or with thee die : to Argos I will lead thee,
 If here I perish not; or dying here
 Remain with thee. But what my mind suggests
 Hear: if Diana were averse to this,
 How could the voice of Phœbus from his shrine
 Declare that to the state of Pallas hence
 The statue of the goddess I should bear,
 And see thy face? All this together weigh'd
 Gives hope of fair success, and our return.

IPH. But how effect it, that we neither die,
 And what we wish achieve? For our return
 On this depends: this claims deliberate thought.

ORES. Have we not means to work the tyrant's death?

IPH. For strangers full of peril were th' attempt.

ORES. Thee would it save and me, it must be dar'd.

IPH. I could not: yet thy promptness I approve.

ORES. What if thou lodge me in the shrine conceal'd?

IPH. That in the shades of night we may escape?

ORES. Night is a friend to frauds, the light to truth.

IPH. Within are sacred guards; we 'scape not them.

ORES. Ruin then waits us: how can we be sav'd?

IPH. I think I have some new and safe device.

ORES. What is it? Let me know: impart thy thought.

IPH. Thy sufferings for my purpose I will use.

ORES. To form devices quick is woman's wit.

IPH. And say, thy mother slain thou fledd'st from Argos.

ORES. If to aught good, avail thee of my ills.

IPH. Unmeet then at this shrine to offer thee.

ORES. What cause alleg'd? I reach not thine intent.

IPH. As now impure: when hallow'd, I will slay thee.

ORES. How is the image thus more promptly gain'd?

IPH. Thee I will hallow in the ocean waves.

ORES. The statue we would gain is in the temple.

IPH. That, by thy touch polluted, I would cleanse.

ORES. Where? On the wat'ry margin of the main?

IPH. Where thy tall bark secur'd with cables rides.

ORES. And who shall bear the image in his hands?

- IPH. Myself: profan'd by any touch but mine.
- ORES. What of this blood shall on my friend be charg'd?
- IPH. His hands, it shall be said, like thine are stain'd.
- ORES. In secret this, or to the king disclos'd?
- IPH. With his assent; I cannot hide it from him.
- ORES. My bark with ready oars attends thee near.
- IPH. That all be well appointed be thy charge.
- ORES. One thing alone remains, that these conceal
Our purpose: but address them, teach thy tongue
Persuasive words: a woman hath the pow'r
To melt the heart to pity: thus perchance
All things may to our warmest wish succeed.
- IPH. Ye train of females, to my soul most dear,
On you mine eyes are turn'd, on you depends
My fate, with prosperous fortune to be blest,
Or to be nothing, to my country lost,
Of a dear kinsman and a much lov'd brother
Depriv'd. This plea I first would urge, that we
Are women, and have hearts by nature form'd
To love each other, of our mutual trusts
Most firm preservers. Touching our design
Be silent, and assist our flight: nought claims
More honour than the faithful tongue. You see
How the same fortune links us three, most dear
Each to the other, to revisit safe
Our country, or to die. If I am sav'd,
That thou may'st share my fortune, I to Greece
Will bring thee safe: but thee by this right hand,
Thee I conjure, and thee; by this lov'd cheek
Thee, by thy knees, by all that in your house
Is dearest to you, father, mother, child,
If you have children. What do you reply?
Which of you speaks assent? Or which dissents?
But be you all assenting: for my plea
If you approve not, ruin falls on me,
And my unhappy brother too must die.
- CHOR. Be confident, lov'd lady, and consult
Only thy safety: all thou giv'st in charge,

Be witness, mighty Jove, I will conceal.

IPH. Oh for this generous promise be you blest !
 To enter now the temple be * thy part,
 And * thine: for soon the monarch of the land
 Will come, enquiring if the strangers yet
 Have bow'd their necks as victims at the shrine.—
 Goddess rever'd, who in the dreadful bay
 Of Aulis from my father's slaughtering hand
 Didst save me, save me now, and these: through thee
 Else will the voice of Phœbus be no more
 Held true by mortals: from this barbarous land
 To Athens go propitious; here to dwell
 Beseems thee not: thine be a polish'd state !

CHORUS.

STRO. 1. O bird, that round each craggy height
 Projecting o'er the sea below,
 Wheelest thy melancholy flight,
 Thy song attun'd to notes of woe ;
 The wise thy tender sorrows own,
 Which thy lost lord unceasing moan :
 Like thine, sad Halcyon, be my strain,
 A bird that have no wings to fly :
 With fond desire for Greece I sigh,
 And for my much lov'd social train ;
 Sigh for Diana, pitying maid,
 Who joys to rove o'er Cynthus' heights,
 Or in the branching laurel's shade,
 Or in the soft-hair'd palm delights,
 Or the hoar olive's sacred boughs,
 Lenient of sad Latona's woes,
 Or in the lake that rolls its wave
 Where swans their plumage love to lave,
 Then to the Muses soaring high,
 The homage pay of melody.

ANTIS. 1. Ye tears, what frequent-falling show'rs

* To Orestes and Pylades.

Roll'd down these cheeks in streams of woe,
 When in the dust my country's tow'rs
 Lay levell'd by the conquering foe;
 And, to their spears a prey, their oars
 Brought me to these barbaric shores!
 For gold exchang'd, a traffic base,
 No vulgar slave, the task is mine
 Here at Diana's awful shrine,
 Who loves the woodland hind to chase,
 The virgin priestess to attend,
 Daughter of rich Mycenæ's lord;
 At other shrines her wish to bend,
 Where bleeds the victim less abhorr'd:
 No respite to her griefs she knows,
 Not so the heart inur'd to woes,
 As train'd to sorrow's rigid lore:
 Now comes a change, it mourns no more.
 But to long bliss when ill succeeds,
 The anguish'd heart for ever bleeds.
 STRO. 2. Thee, lov'd virgin, freed from fear
 Home the Argive bark shall bear:
 Mountain Pan with shrilling strain,
 To the oars that dash the main
 In just cadence well agreed,
 Shall accord his wax-join'd reed:
 Phœbus, with a prophet's fire
 Sweeping o'er his sev'n-string'd lyre,
 And his voice attuning high
 To the swelling harmony,
 Thee shall guide the wild waves o'er
 To the soft Athenian shore.
 Leaving me, thy oars shall sweep
 Eager o'er the foaming deep;
 Thou shalt catch the rising gales
 Swelling in thy firm-bound sails;
 And thy bark in gallant pride
 Light shall o'er the billows glide.
 ANTIS. 2. Might I through the lucid air

Fly where rolls yon flaming car,
 O'er those lov'd and modest bow'rs,
 Where I pass'd my youthful hours,
 I would stay my weary flight,
 Wave no more my pennons light,
 But amidst the virgin band,
 Once my lov'd companions, stand:
 Once 'midst them my charms could move,
 Blooming then, the flames of love:
 When the mazy dance I trod,
 Whilst with joy my mother glow'd;
 When to vie in grace was mine,
 And in splendid robes to shine;
 For with radiant tints imprest
 Glow'd for me the gorgeous vest;
 And these tresses gave new grace,
 As their ringlets shade my face.

THOAS, IPHIGENIA, CHORUS.

- THO. Where is the Grecian lady, to whose charge
 This temple is committed? Have her rites
 Hallow'd the strangers? Do their bodies burn
 In the recesses of the sacred shrine?
 CHOR. She comes, and will inform thee, king, of all.
 THO. Daughter of Agamemnon, what means this!
 The statue of the goddess in thine arms
 Why dost thou bear from its firm base remov'd?
 IPH. There in the portal, monarch, stay thy step.
 THO. What of strange import in the shrine hath chanc'd?
 IPH. Things ominous: that word I, holy, speak.
 THO. To what is tun'd thy proem? Plainly speak.
 IPH. Not pure the victims, king, you lately seiz'd.
 THO. What shew'd thee this? Or speak'st thou but thy thought?
 IPH. Back turn'd the sacred image on its base.
 THO. Spontaneous turn'd, or by an earthquake mov'd?
 IPH. Spontaneous: and, averted, clos'd its eyes.
 THO. What was the cause? The blood-stain'd strangers' guilt?
 IPH. That, and nought else: for horrible their deeds.

- THO. What, have they slain some Scythian on the shore?
 IPH. They came polluted with domestic blood.
 THO. What blood? I have a strong desire to know.
 IPH. They slew their mother with confederate swords.
 THO. O Phœbus? This hath no barbarian dar'd.
 IPH. All Greece indignant chas'd them from her realms.
 THO. Bear'st thou for this the image from the shrine?
 IPH. To the pure air, from stain of blood remov'd.
 THO. By what means didst thou know the strangers' guilt?
 IPH. I learn'd it as the statue started back.
 THO. Greece train'd thee wise: this well hast thou discern'd.
 IPH. Now with sweet blandishments they sooth my soul.
 THO. Some glozing tale from Argos telling thee?
 IPH. I have one brother: he, they say, lives happy.
 THO. That thou may'st save them for their pleasing news?
 IPH. And that my father lives, by fortune bless'd.
 THO. But on the goddess well thy thoughts are turn'd.
 IPH. I hate all Greece; for it hath ruin'd me.
 THO. What with the strangers, say then, should be done?
 IPH. The law ordain'd in reverence we must hold.
 THO. Are then thy lovers ready, and the sword?
 IPH. First I would cleanse them with ablutions pure.
 THO. In fountain waters, or the ocean wave?
 IPH. All man's pollutions doth the salt sea cleanse.
 THO. More holy to the goddess will they bleed.
 IPH. And better what I have in charge advance.
 THO. Doth not the wave e'en 'gainst the temple beat?
 IPH. This requires solitude: more must I do.
 THO. Lead where thou wilt: on secret rites I pry not.
 IPH. The image of the goddess I must cleanse.
 THO. If it be stain'd with touch of mother's blood.
 IPH. I could not else have borne it from its base.
 THO. Just is thy provident and pious thought:
 For this by all the state thou art rever'd.
 IPH. Know'st thou what next I would?

1300. This line is restored to its proper place from v. 1214; to which its measure shews that it could not belong.

- THO. 'Tis thine thy will
To signify.
- IPH. Give for these strangers chains.
- THO. To what place can they fly?
- IPH. A Grecian knows
Nought faithful.
- THO. Of my train go some for chains.
- IPH. Let them lead forth the strangers.
- THO. Be it so.
- IPH. And veil their faces.
- THO. From the sun's bright beams?
- IPH. Some of thy train send with me.
- THO. These shall go
Attending thee.
- IPH. One to the city send.
- THO. With what instructions charg'd?
- IPH. That all remain
Within their houses.
- THO. That the stain of blood
They meet not?
- IPH. These things have pollution in them.
- THO. Go thou, and bear th' instructions.
- IPH. That none come
In sight.
- THO. How wisely careful for the city!
- IPH. Warn our friends most.
- THO. This speaks thy care for me.
- IPH. Stay thou before the shrine.
- THO. To what intent?
- IPH. Cleanse it with lustral fires.
- THO. That thy return
May find it pure?
- IPH. But when the strangers come
Forth from the temple.
- THO. What must I then do?

1316. Cleanse it with lustral fires. "Αγνισον πυρσὺν μίλαθρον. v. 1216. *Markland.*

IPH. Spread o'er thine eyes a veil.

THO. That I receive not
Pollution?

IPH. Tedious if my stay appear,

THO. What bounds may be assign'd?

IPH. Deem it not strange.

THO. At leisure what the rites require perform.

IPH. May this lustration as I wish succeed.

THO. Thy wish is mine.

IPH. But from the temple, see,
The strangers come, the sacred ornaments,
The hallow'd lambs, for I with blood must wash
This execrable blood away, the light
Of torches, and what else my rites require
To purify these strangers to the goddess.
But to the natives of this land my voice
Proclaims, from this pollution far remove,
Art thou attendant at the shrine, who listest
Pure to the gods thy hands, or nuptial rites
Dost thou prepare, or pregnant Matron, hence,
Be gone, that this defilement none may touch.
Thou, daughter of Latona and high Jove,
O royal virgin, if I cleanse the stain
Of these, and where I ought with holy rites
Address thee, thou shalt hold thy residence
In a pure mansion; we too shall be blest.
More though I speak not, goddess, unexpress'd
All things to thee, and to the gods are known.

CHOR. Latona's glorious offspring claims the song,
Born the hallow'd shades among
Where fruitful Delos winds her valleys low;
Bright-hair'd Phœbus skill'd t' inspire
Raptures as he sweeps the lyre,
And she that glories in th' unerring bow.
From the rocky ridges steep,
At whose foot the hush'd waves sleep,

Left their far famed native shore,
Them th' exulting mother bore
To Parnassus, on whose heights
Bacchus shouting holds his rites ;
Glitt'ring in the burnish'd shade,
By the laurel's branches made,
Where th' enormous dragon lies,
Brass his scales, and flame his eyes,
Earth-born monster, that around
Rolling guards th' oracular ground :
Him, while yet a sportive child
In his mother's arms that smil'd,
Phœbus slew, and seiz'd the shrine
Whence proceeds the voice divine ;
On the golden tripod plac'd,
Throne by falsehood ne'er disgrac'd,
Where Castalia's pure stream flows,
He the fates to mortals shews.
But when Themis, whom of yore
Earth, her fruitful mother, bore,
From her hallow'd seat he drove,
Earth t' avenge her daughter strove,
Forming visions of the night,
Which, in rapt dreams hov'ring light,
All that Time's dark volumes hold
Might to mortal sense unfold,
When in midnight's sable shades
Sleep the silent couch invades :
Thus did Earth her vengeance boast.
His prophetic honours lost,
Royal Phœbus speeds his flight
To Olympus, on whose height
At the throne of Jove he stands,
Stretching forth his little hands,
Suppliant that the Pythian shrine
Feel no more the wrath divine ;
That the goddess he appease,
That her nightly visions cease.

Jove with smiles beheld his son
 Early thus address his throne,
 Suing with ambitious pride
 O'er the rich shrine to preside:
 He assenting bow'd his head.
 Strait the nightly visions fled;
 And prophetic dreams no more
 Hover'd slumb'ring mortals o'er:
 Now to Phœbus giv'n again
 All his honours pure remain;
 Votaries distant regions send
 His frequented throne t' attend,
 And the firm decrees of fate
 On his faithful voice await.

MESSENGER, CHORUS.

- MESS. Say you, that keep the temple and attend
 The altar, where is Thoas, Scythia's king?
 Open these strong-compacted gates, and call
 Forth from the shrine the monarch of the land.
- CHOR. Wherefore? at thy command if I must speak.
- MESS. The two young men are gone, through the device
 Of Agamemnon's daughter; from this land
 They fly, and in their Grecian galley plac'd
 The sacred image of the goddess bear.
- CHOR. Incredible thy tale: but whom thou seekest
 The monarch from the temple went in haste.
- MESS. Whither? for what is doing he should know.
- CHOR. We know not: but go thou and seek for him:
 Where'er thou find him, thou wilt tell him this.
- MESS. See, what a faithless race you women are!
 In all that hath been done you have a part.
- CHOR. Sure thou art mad: what with the strangers' flight
 Have we to do? But wilt thou not with all
 The speed thou may'st go to the monarch's house?
- MESS. Not till I first am well inform'd if here

Within the temple be the king, or not.
 Unbar the gates: to you within I speak:
 And tell your lord that at the portal here
 I stand, and bring him tidings of fresh ills.

THOAS, MESSENGER, CHORUS.

- THO. Who at the temple of the goddess dares
 This clamour raise, and thund'ring at the gates
 Strikes terror through the ample space within?
- MESS. With falsehoods would these women drive me hence,
 Without to seek thee: thou wast in the shrine.
- THO. With what intent? or what advantage sought?
- MESS. Of these hereafter: what more urgent now
 Imports thee, hear: the virgin, in this place
 Presiding at the altars, from this land
 Is with the strangers fled, and bears with her
 The sacred image of the goddess: all
 Of her ablutions but a false pretence.
- THO. How say'st thou? What is her accurs'd design?
- MESS. To save Orestes: this too will amaze thee.
- THO. Whom? What Orestes? Clytemnestra's son?
- MESS. Him at the altar hallow'd now to bleed.
- THO. Portentous! for what less can it be call'd?
- MESS. Think not on that, but hear me; with deep thought
 Reflect; weigh well what thou shalt hear, devise
 By what pursuit to reach and seize the strangers.
- THO. Speak: thou advisest well: the sea though nigh,
 They fly no^t so as to escape my spear.
- MESS. When to the shore we came, where station'd rode
 The galley of Orestes by the rocks
 Conceal'd, to us, whom thou hadst sent with her
 To hold the strangers' chains, the royal maid
 Made signs that we retire, and stand aloof,
 As if with secret rites she would perform
 The purpos'd expiation: on she went,
 In her own hands holding the strangers' chains
 Behind them: not without suspicion this,
 Yet by thy servants, king, allow'd. At length,

That we might deem her in some purpose high
 Employ'd, she rais'd her voice, and chaunted loud
 Barbaric strains, as if with mystic rites
 She cleans'd the stain of blood. When we had sate
 A tedious while, it came into our thought
 That from their chains unloos'd the stranger youths
 Might kill her, and escape by flight: yet fear
 Of seeing what we ought not kept us still
 In silence; but at length we all resolv'd
 To go, though not permitted, where they were.
 There we behold the Grecian bark with oars
 Well furnish'd, wing'd for flight: and at their seats
 Grasping their oars were fifty rowers; free
 From chains beside the stern the two youths stood.
 Some from the prow reliev'd the keel with poles;
 Some weigh'd the anchors up; the climbing ropes
 Some hasten'd, through their hands the cables drew,
 Launch'd the light bark, and gave her to the main.
 But when we saw their treacherous wiles, we rush'd
 Heedless of danger, seiz'd the priestess, seiz'd
 The halsers, hung upon the helm, and strove
 To rend the rudder-bands away. Debate
 Now rose: what mean you, sailing o'er the seas,
 The statue and the priestess from the land
 By stealth conveying? Whence art thou, and who,
 That bear'st her, like a purchas'd slave, away?
 He said, I am her brother, be of this
 Inform'd, Orestes, son of Agamemnon;
 My sister, so long lost, I bear away,
 Recover'd here. But nought the less for that
 Held we the priestess, and by force would lead
 Again to thee: hence dreadful on our cheeks
 The blows; for in their hands no sword they held,
 Nor we; but many a rattling stroke the youths
 Dealt with their fists; against our sides and breasts
 Their arms fierce darting, till our batter'd limbs

Were all disabled; now with dreadful marks
 Disfigur'd up the precipice we fly,
 Some bearing on their heads, some in their eyes
 The bloody bruises: standing on the heights
 Our fight was safer, and we hurl'd at them
 Fragments of rocks; but standing on the stern
 The archers with their arrows drove us thence,
 And now a swelling wave roll'd in, which drove
 The galley tow'rds the land; the sailors fear'd
 The sudden swell: on his left arm sustain'd
 Orestes bore his sister through the tide,
 Mounted the bark's tall side, and on the deck
 Safe plac'd her, and Diana's holy image
 Which fell from heav'n: from the mid ship his voice
 He sent aloud, Ye youths, that in this bark
 From Argos plough'd the deep, now ply your oars,
 And dash the billows till they foam: those things
 Are ours, for which we swept the Euxine sea,
 And steer'd our course within its clashing rocks.
 They gave a cheerful shout, and with their oars
 Dash'd the salt wave. The galley, whilst it rode
 Within the harbour, work'd its easy way;
 But having pass'd its mouth, the swelling flood
 Roll'd on it, and with sudden force the wind
 Impetuous rising drove it back; their oars
 They slack'd not, stoutly struggling 'gainst the wave;
 But tow'rds the land the reflux flood impell'd
 The galley: then the royal virgin stood,
 And pray'd, O daughter of Latona, save me,
 Thy priestess save; from this barbaric land

1509. "Ε9κ' ἀδελφὴν ἐντὸς εὐσήμεου νεώς,
 Τό τ' οὐρανῷ πάσημα, τῆς Διὸς κόρης
 "Αγαλμα· νῆς τ' ἐκ μίσης ἐφθίγαστο. v. 1383, &c.

This punctuation of Mr. Heath assigns the words that follow to Orestes: they are his exhortation to the sailors, not the speech of the statue, which had never sailed on the Euxine sea, but fell from heaven to this Tauric shrine. He adds further, that if Diana had openly favoured the attempts of Orestes by so illustrious a miracle, the prayers of Iphigenia to that goddess for protection would have been unnecessary.

To Greece restore me, and forgive my thefts:
 For thou, O goddess, dost thy brother love,
 Deem then that I love those allied to me.
 The mariners responsive to her pray'r
 Shouted loud Pæans, and their naked arms,
 Each cheering each, to their stout oars apply.
 But nearer, and yet nearer to the rock
 The galley drove; some rush'd into the sea,
 Some strain'd the ropes that bind the loosen'd sails.
 Strait was I hither sent to thee, O king,
 T' inform thee of these accidents. But haste,
 Take chains and gyves with thee; for if the flood
 Subside not to a calm, there is no hope
 Of safety to the strangers. Be assur'd
 That Neptune, awful monarch of the main,
 Remembers Troy, and, hostile to the race
 Of Pelops, will deliver to thy hands,
 And to thy people, as is meet, the son
 Of Agamemnon; and bring back to thee
 His sister, who the goddess hath betray'd,
 Unmindful of the blood at Aulis shed.

CHOR. Unhappy Iphigenia, thou must die,
 Thy brother too must die, if thou again,
 Seiz'd in thy flight, to thy lord's hands shalt come.

THO. Inhabitants of this barbaric land,
 Will you not rein your steeds, will you not fly
 Along the shore, to seize whate'er this skiff
 Of Greece casts forth, and for your goddess rous'd
 Hunt down these impious men? Will you not launch
 Instant your swift-oar'd barks, by sea, by land
 To catch them, from the rugged rock to hurl
 Their bodies, or impale them on the stake?
 But for you women, in these dark designs
 Accomplices, hereafter, as I find
 Convenient leisure, I will punish you.
 Th' occasion urges now, and gives no pause.

MIN. Whither, O royal Thoas, dost thou lead
 This vengeful chase? Attend: Minerva speaks.

Cease thy pursuit, and stop this rushing flood
 Of arms; for hither by the fateful voice
 Of Phœbus came Orestes, warn'd to fly
 The anger of the Furies, to convey
 His sister to her native Argos back,
 And to my land the sacred image bear.
 Thoas, I speak to thee: him, whom thy rage
 Would kill, Orestes, on the wild waves seiz'd,
 Neptune, to do me grace, already wafts
 On the smooth sea, the swelling surges calm'd.
 And thou, Orestes, (for my voice thou hearest,
 Though distant far,) to my commands attend:
 Go, with the sacred image, which thou bearest,
 And with thy sister: but when thou shalt come
 To Athens built by gods, there is a place
 On th' extreme borders of the Attic land,
 Close neighb'ring to Carystia's craggy height,
 Sacred, my people call it Alæ: there
 A temple raise, and fix the statue there,
 Which from the Tauric goddess shall receive
 Its name, and from thy toils, which thou, through Greece
 Driv'n by the Furies' madd'ning stings, hast borne;
 And mortals shall in future times with hymns
 The Tauric goddess there, Diana, hail.
 And be this law establish'd, when the feast
 For thy deliverance from this shrine is held,
 To a man's throat that they apply the sword,
 And draw the blood, in memory of these rites,
 That of her honours nought the goddess lose.
 Thou, Iphigenia, on the hallow'd heights
 Of Brauron on this goddess shalt attend
 Her priestess, dying shalt be there interr'd,
 Grac'd with the honours of the gorgeous vests
 Of finest texture, in their houses left
 By matrons who in childbed pangs expir'd.
 These Grecian dames back to their country lead,

1591. 'Ορίας Ἰνατι, θιάς ὅπως τιμὰς ἔχῃ. v. 1461. *Markland.*

I charge thee: justice this return demands;
 For I sav'd thee, when on the mount of Mars
 The votes were equal: and from that decree
 The shells in number equal, still absolve.
 But, son of Agamemnon, from this land
 Thy sister bear; nor, Thoas, be thou angry.

THO. Royal Minerva, he that hears the gods
 Commanding, and obeys not, is unwise.
 My anger 'gainst Orestes flames no more,
 Gone though he be, and bears with him away
 The statue of the goddess, and his sister.
 Have mortals glory 'gainst the pow'rful gods
 Contending? Let them go, and to thy land
 The sacred image bear, and fix it there;
 Good fortune go with them. To favour'd Grece
 These dames, at thy high bidding, I will send.
 My arms will I restrain, which I had rais'd
 Against the strangers, and my swift-oar'd barks,
 Since, potent goddess, this is pleasing to thee.

MIN. I praise thy resolution; for the pow'r
 Of fate o'er thee and o'er the gods prevails.
 Breathe soft ye fav'ring gales, to Athens bear
 These sprung from Agamemnon; on their course
 Attending I will go, and heedful save
 My sister's sacred image. * You too go
 Prosp'rous, and in the fate, that guards you blest.

CHOR. O thou, among th' immortal gods rever'd,
 And mortal men, Minerva, we will do
 As thou commandest; for with transport high,
 Exceeding hope, our ears receive thy words.
 O Victory, I revere thy awful pow'r:
 Guard thou my life, nor ever cease to crown me!

* To the Chorus.

1629. The Phœnissæ and Orestes also conclude with these lines: they are the supplication of the poet for the favourable reception of his tragedy, and allude to the Crown with which the successful drama was honoured; hence his Hippolytus bears the title of *εὐφρανιφόρος*.

ANDROMACHE.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

ANDROMACHE

HERMIONE

MENELAUS

MOLOSSUS

PELEUS

ORESTES

THETIS

FEMALE ATTENDANTS

MESSENGER

CHORUS of PHTHIAN VIRGINS.

ANDROMACHE.

THE reader is already acquainted with the principal Persons of this Drama, and will again be moved with the distresses of the excellent but unhappy wife of Hector, a character of modest virtue and conscious dignity finely supported through the most trying scenes of affliction that can rend the human heart. Hecuba in the midst of her miseries derived some consolation from the thought of future fame : she says,

The gods intended nothing, but my woes.—
Yet from their heights above had not their pow'r
Encompass'd us, and low beneath the earth
Sunk us in ruin, by the Muses' voice
We had not been recorded, nor to bards
Of latest ages giv'n the lofty verse.

In this respect happy is Andromache in having her virtues recorded, and her fame rendered immortal by the Muses of Homer, Euripides, Virgil, and Racine.

Menelaus acts the same base part here, as before in the Orestes : and even Hermione, who there was all gentleness, is here insolent and cruel : but they were Spartans, and of course to receive their colouring from the political interests of the two rival states. Non seulement le Théâtre Comique, mais le Tragique même, devinrent une satire des peuples ou des personnes qui déplaisoient au public.—On y voit un

progrès d'émulation et de rivalité entre Athènes et Sparte très-bien marqué. On élève Athènes aux cieux ; on met Sparte, par grace, au second degré, parce qu'Athènes aspireroit au souverain. Quelquefois la haine se découvre, et un lance sur les Lacédémoniens des mots extrêmement piquans. *P. Brumoy.*

Some critics have greatly distressed themselves to vindicate the Poet from the charge of violating the unity of time in this drama. Orestes quits the scene with menaces against the life of Neoptolemus, who was then at Delphi : almost immediately after his departure a messenger arrives with an account of that prince's death, and his body is brought to Phthia : Orestes therefore could not have been present at the murder, or the Poet must be guilty of transgressing one of the great laws of the drama. Euripides tells his story very ill, a thing not usual with him, if Orestes was not present at the murder ; but his words are tortured to make him plead not guilty to a charge, of which a very little attention would have acquitted him. Orestes at his first entrance tells the Chorus that he was going to consult the oracle of Jupiter at Dodona ; not that he had any such intention, but his business was to conceal his real purpose : when he found how Hermione, the object of his wishes, and for whose sake, as well as through resentment, he had formed this bloody design, was affected towards Neoptolemus, he says enough to calm her fears ; but he must have been very imprudent, had he at that time and at that place discovered that he had already perpetrated the deed : besides, the management of the theatre required that it should not yet be known. With regard to his pretended journey to Dodona Dr. Musgrave observes well, Hoc veteratorie dictum est, ut reliqua ejus *ῥησιῶς* :

had the Critic extended this to the whole of his speech to Hermione from v. 993. to v. 1008. in the original, that is, from l. 1116. to l. 1131. in the translation, he would have shewn that he entered into the design of the poet, that Neoptolemus was already slain; that after the deed Orestes hastened from Delphi to Phthia with the design of bearing Hermione with him; and consequently that all these forced interpretations are neither necessary nor pertinent.

The scene is before the temple of Thetis adjoining to the palace of Neoptolemus near Phthia.

ANDROMACHE.

AND. **T**HOU grace of Asia's empire, tow' red Thebe,
From whence, with all the gorgeous pomp of gold
Endow'd, to Priam's royal house I came
In marriage giv'n to Hector; in those days
Andromache was blest, supremely blest,
But now of all my sex that e'er have liv'd,
Or e'er shall live, I am the greatest wretch :
For by Achilles I have seen my lord,
My Hector slaughter'd; and my son, the pledge
Of our connubial love, Astyanax,
Hurl'd headlong from the rampires' tow' red height,
After the Grecian arms had vanquish'd Troy.
But I, who in a palace had been nurs'd
E'en in the lap of liberty, was brought
To Greece a slave, to Neoptolemus,
An island lord, assign'd the prize of war,
Selected from the spoils of plunder'd Troy.
In Phthia and Pharsalia, neighb'ring towns,
I have my habitation, in whose plains
The sea-born Thetis once with Peleus dwelt
Apart, retiring from the haunts of men ;
In honour of the goddess holding here
Her nuptials, Thetidæum is the place
By the Thessalians nam'd : and here the chief,
Son of Achilles, in this house hath fix'd
His residence, and o'er Thessalia's realms
Lets Peleus reign, unwilling to receive
The sceptre whilst the hoary king yet lives.
Forc'd to th' embraces of my lord, a son

I in this house have borne; and till this hour,
Sunk as I was by my afflictions, hope
Still flatter'd me that, were my son preserv'd,
Some comfort, some protection I might find
Amidst my ills: but since this Spartan bride,
Hermione, he weds, from me his slave
My lord hath been estrang'd, and I by her
Am with most cruel injuries oppress'd;
Accus'd that by my secret-working spells
I make her childless, and her husband's love
Charm from her, wishing in this house myself,
Holding her place, to dwell, her bed by force
Cast out. But I have lost, what I at first
Unwillingly receiv'd. Almighty Jove
Be witness that unwillingly I shar'd
His bed! But all I urge is lost on her,
And she resolves to kill me: with her joins
Her father Menelaus, and to this house
From Sparta for this purpose now is come.
But I dismay'd have left th' adjoining house,
And suppliant at the shrine of Thetis sit,
If she from death will save me; for this place
Peleus, and all that sprung from Peleus, hold
In reverence, of the goddess and her nuptials
Hallow'd memorial. But mine only son
I to another house have sent by stealth,
Fearing his death: for he, who gave him birth,
Is not at hand to succour me, his son
In him finds no protection, in the land
Of Delphi distant far, to Phœbus where
He makes atonement for th' ungovern'd rage
Which urg'd him once at Pytho on the god
To call for vengeance for his father's death;
If haply Phœbus for his past offence
He may propitiate, by his vows appeas'd.

ANDROMACHE, FEMALE ATTENDANT.

ATT. My royal mistress, for that name my tongue

Shall not refuse, accusom'd in thy house,
When we in Troy together dwelt, to pay
That honour; and a zeal, which sprung from love
For thee and for thy husband when he liv'd,
Prompted my duty: now too am I come
To tell thee what I know, with fear indeed
Lest by our lords not unperceiv'd, yet mov'd
With pity tow'rds thee. Dreadful the designs
By Menelaus and by his daughter form'd
Against thee: reason is thou guard thee well.

AND. My dearest fellow-slave, for thou art now
A fellow-slave with me who was thy queen
Once, but am now a wretch, what their design?
What treacherous business plan they now, intent
To take away my miserable life?

ATT. Thy son, whom from the house thou hast remov'd
By stealth, unhappy lady, they will slay.

AND. Is it then known, ah me! where I my son
Endeavour'd to conceal? How was it known?
Ah cruel fortune, how am I undone!

ATT. I know not: but of them these things I learn'd;
And Menelaus is gone to seize thy son.

AND. Then I am lost indeed. Thee, O my child,
Will these two vultures seize and kill; whilst he,
Who gave thee birth, at Delphi lingers yet.

ATT. I think thou wou'dst not suffer ills like these,
Were he but present: thou art friendless now.

AND. Of Peleus, and his coming, is nought heard?

ATT. Little, if present, would his age avail thee.

AND. Yet have I sent to him not once alone.

ATT. Is it that none, whom thou hast sent, regards thee?

AND. Whence should they? Wilt thou then my message bear?

ATT. What for so long an absence shall I plead?

AND. Thou art a woman, and wilt find excuse.

ATT. 'Tis dangerous: watchful is Hermione.

AND. See, in their ills thou canst forsake thy friends.

ATT. Not so; with that reproach me not: I go:
For whate'er vengeance falls on me, my life,

A woman and a slave, is little worth.

AND. Go then, this instant go: and I will vent
To yon ethereal skies my griefs, my plaints,
My tears: for women are by nature form'd
To feel some consolation, when their tongue
Gives utterance to th' afflictions they endure.
Mine is no single grief, my sorrows flow
From various sources: my paternal realm,
My slaughter'd Hector, and my ruthless fate,
Which bows me to the yoke of servitude,
Unworthy fall, I mourn. No mortal man
May therefore be call'd happy, till you see
The last of all his days, and how, that pass'd,
He to the realms of Pluto shall descend.

A pest, and not a bride, to Ilium's tow'rs
The mischief-working Helen Paris bore;
For her in arms combin'd the Grecian pow'rs
Sought with a thousand ships the Phrygian shore.

On thee, O Troy, with fire with slaughter falls,
And on my Hector, swift the vengeful war;
Him the proud son of Thetis round the walls
Dragg'd in the dust, as roll'd his rapid car.

Beneath the hateful yoke of slav'ry bow'd
They led me from my chamber to the strand;
Tears, as I left the city, copious flow'd,
Left my lov'd husband on the bloody sand.

Can I yet wish to view yon radiant sky,
A slave, Hermione's harsh pride that bears?
From which a suppliant to this shrine I fly,
And like a dropping rock dissolve in tears.

ANDROMACHE, CHORUS.

CHORUS.

STRO. 1. O thou, who on the ground, before the shrine
Of Thetis, pow'r divine,

Long seated, wilt not quit the hallow'd place,
 From Asia though thy race,
 And Phthia claims my birth, to thee
 I come, if aught my melting heart can find
 To ease the anguish of thy tortur'd mind:
 Since rage inflames Hermione,
 In vengeance bursting on thy head,
 The hated rival of her bed.

ANTIS.1. Thy fortune know: reflect what ills await
 Thy present hapless state:
 A Trojan dame, with those how hard to strive
 From Sparta who derive
 Their race, thy lords: no more contend:
 Avails it, at their rigour though dismay'd,
 That soil'd in dust thy wasted form is laid!
 With these, who here resistless reign,
 Weak as thou art, why strive in vain?

STRO.2. Depart then; quit the Nereid's splendid seat:
 And know that in a foreign state
 Thou art a slave to foes;
 'Mongst whom of all thy former train
 Thou canst not see a friend remain,
 O nymph oppress'd with woes!

ANTIS.2. Yet pity, dame of Ilium, knows her part,
 And melts for thee my tender heart;
 But silent drops the tear;
 Lest that my bosom feels thy woe
 This Jove-descended queen should know:
 Our lords' stern pow'r I fear.

HERMIONE, ANDROMACHE, CHORUS.

HERM. With these resplendent ornaments of gold
 Decking my tresses, in this robe array'd,
 Which bright with various-tinctur'd radiance flames,
 Not from the house of Peleus or Achilles
 A bridal gift, I come: in Sparta this
 From Menelaus, my father, I receiv'd,
 With a rich dowry: therefore I may speak

Freely, and thus to you address my words.
Woman, wou'dst thou, a slave, beneath the spear
A captive, keep possession of this house,
And drive me out? I through thy baleful spells
Am hated by my husband, for my bed
Is childless: dreadful potency the dames
Of Asia boast in charms like these: but thee
I will from such restrain; for nought this house
Of sea-born Thetis shall avail thee, nought
Her altar, or her shrine; for thou shalt die.
But should some god or mortal save thy life,
Thou shalt be humbled for thy former pride,
And made to tremble, crouching at my knee,
To sweep my house, to sprinkle crystal dew
From golden vases, and to know where now
Thou art: nor Hector here, nor Priam reigns,
Nor is this Chryse, but a Grecian town.
Thou wretch, so void of feeling is thy mind,
That thou hast dar'd to share the bed of him
Whose father slew thy husband, and to bear
Children to him that from his murderer sprung.
But such are all the rude barbarian race;
Father with daughter, son with mother weds,
Brother with sister; and the dearest friends
Rush on through mutual slaughter; no restraint
Of law they know: these customs teach not here.
For that one man should of two wives be lord
Honour allows not: but one nuptial bed
Enjoying, let them fondly cherish that,
Whoe'er without disquiet wish to dwell.

CHOR. Our sex, to jealousy by nature prone,
Brooks not a rival in the nuptial bed.

AND. Ah, what an ill to mortal man is youth,
And most to him whose youth no justice knows!
But much I fear lest that to be thy slave

188. Chryse, a town of Cilicia, under the dominion of Eetion, the father of Andromache, whose royal seat was at Thebe.

Excludes me from the liberty of speech,
Though I have much to say which justice prompts :
Nay, should my plea be deem'd of weight, I fear
Its force will hence be lost, that they, whose pride
Aspires beyond control, ill brook the speech
Of those beneath them, though with reason urg'd :
Yet will I not be wanting to myself.
Say then, young princess, what convincing proof
Persuades thee that from thy connubial bed
I drive thee : is the Spartan state of pow'r
Less than the Phrygian ? Me dost thou behold
By fortune rais'd to eminence, or free ?
Or am I with the opening bloom of youth,
Or with my country's greatness, or with friends
Elate, that I should have a wish to keep
Possession of thy house ? For what ? That I
Should be a mother in thy place, and bear
Sons to be slaves, a miserable train
My wretchedness attending ? Who my sons,
Shou'dst thou be childless, would permit to reign
At Phthia ? Me, belike, the Grecians love
For Hector's sake, and that I liv'd obscure
Among the Phrygians, not in royal state.
My spells effect not that thy husband hates thee,
But thine own manners, unaccording found
With love's sweet converse : this the magic charm :
It is not beauty, lady, that delights
The husband's mind, but virtue's winning force.
Thee if aught piques, the Spartan state is high
Extoll'd, and Scyros held by thee in scorn,
Thou art, 'mongst those that know not riches, rich,
And Menelaus, thy father, is high rank'd
Above Achilles ; for this waywardness
Thy husband hates thee. It becomes the wife,
Though to a bad man giv'n, to hold him dear,
Nor raise debates through peevishness of pride.

236. Scyros, an island in the Ægean sea, was the birth-place of Neoptolemus.

Hadst thou in Thrace, wet with perpetual snow,
Some tyrant for thy husband, where one man
With many wives shares his connubial bed,
Say, wou'dst thou kill them? So thou wou'dst be found
Unsated appetite in all thy sex
Encouraging: how shameful this! We feel
This passion not less strong, perhaps, than men,
But check it with the curb of modesty.
O my lov'd Hector, I for thy dear sake
Let my affection go with thine, if e'er
Venus deceiv'd thee; and to sons so born
Oft gave this breast, that nought unkind from me
Might wound thy peace: and thus my husband's love
I by my gentle virtue won. But thou
Wilt not allow, through jealous fear, one drop
Of love's ethereal dew to light upon
Thy husband. Seek not, lady, to surpass
In love of man thy mother. It behoves
Children, if wise, such manners to avoid
As their bad mothers mark'd with infamy.

CHOR. Let me persuade thee, lady, with what ease
Thou may'st, to end this strife of words with her.

HERM. What means thy arrogant, contentious speech,
Vaunting thy chastity, and censuring mine?

AND. The subject of thy speech proves thee unchaste.

HERM. Ne'er in my heart be harbour'd thoughts like thine.

AND. Thou art young yet: indecent is thy speech.

HERM. Thou not by words, but actions, dost me wrong.

AND. In silence for thy bed wilt thou not grieve?

HERM. Doth aught more nearly touch a woman's mind?

AND. And well, that mind when modest reason rules.

HERM. Our state we rule not by barbaric laws.

AND. E'en there such laws are base, and shameful here.

HERM. O thou art wise, art wise: yet thou shalt die.

AND. The statue, see, of Thetis looks on thee.

HERM. And hates thy country for Achilles' death.

AND. Helen, thy mother, caus'd his death, not I.

HERM. Wilt thou through all their course trace back my ills?

- AND. See, I am silent, nor unlock my lips.
 HERM. Speak that, for which I to this temple came.
 AND. I say thou hast not prudence, as beseems thee.
 HERM. Wilt thou the Nereid's hallow'd temple leave?
 AND. May I not die: else never will I leave it.
 HERM. Resolv'd, I wait not till my husband comes.
 AND. Nor, till he comes, yield I myself to thee.
 HERM. I will bring fire: I reckon not of the place.
 AND. Then burn me: but these things the gods will see.
 HERM. Thy body shall be gash'd with painful wounds.
 AND. Kill me, pollute the altar with my blood;
 The goddess will avenge the impious deed.
 HERM. Thou savage, thou barbarian, of a soul
 Harden'd to boldness, dost thou thus brave death?
 But I will quickly rouse thee from this seat,
 Thy will assenting; such a charm I have,
 I say not what; th' effect will shew it soon.
 Sit firm: for wert thou fix'd in melted lead,
 I will remove thee, e'er the Phthian chief,
 In whom thy confidence is plac'd, returns.

ANDROMACHE, CHORUS.

- AND. In him my confidence indeed is plac'd.
 Strange, that to mortals 'gainst the venom'd bite
 Of direful serpents healing medicines
 The gods have giv'n; yet none have found a cure
 'Gainst a bad woman, than the viper far
 More noxious, or the violence of fire;
 So pestilent an ill are we to men.

CHORUS.

- STRO. 1. What mis'ries from that fatal day
 Arose, when to th' Idæan grove
 The son of Maia and of Jove,
 Their cars attending on the way,
 Guided the rivals of the skies?

298. Alluding to the method of fixing statues on their pedestals.

The cars roll'd on their splendid state,
 But with them Discord gend'ring hate,
 And contest fierce for beauty's prize:
 Onward they roll'd in evil hour,
 And reach'd the shepherd's lonely bow'r,
 Where, 'midst his flocks that graz'd around,
 The solitary youth they found.

ANTIS. 1. Soon as they reach'd the shady grove,
 Undress'd their shining limbs they lave
 Amidst the cool translucent wave,
 Which tumbles from the heights above;
 Then to the son of Priam came,
 And each, to gain the envied prize,
 Her pow'r displaying proudly vies
 With offer'd gifts his soul t' inflame.
 But Venus, vers'd in winning wiles,
 With words, that please, the youth beguiles;
 But fraught with mischief, war, and fate,
 Destructive to the Trojan state.

STRO. 2. Oh had his mother, on the fatal day
 When Paris first she gave to light,
 Cast the pernicious ill away
 E'er he had fix'd his bow'r on Ida's height!
 When from the laurel's hallow'd shade
 Aloud Cassandra cried, "Destroy
 " This fatal pest of Priam and of Troy."
 Was there of those, whose hoary age
 Render'd their rev'rend counsels sage,
 To whom with ardour the prophetic maid
 Did not her warning prayers apply,
 " Let this ill-omen'd infant die!"

ANTIS. 2. The Trojan dames then slav'ry had not bound
 Condemn'd to drag her galling chain;
 Nor thou on Phthia's hostile ground
 By thy proud lords been taught to taste of pain.
 Then had she freed the Grecian pow'rs
 From all the painful toils of war,
 Which, fir'd with vengeance, from their country far,

Our youth, inur'd to hardships, bore
 In arms on Troy's ensanguin'd shore,
 And fought ten tedious years around her tow'rs:
 No tear had dew'd the widow'd bed,
 No father mourn'd his children dead.

MENELAUS, MOLOSSUS, ANDROMACHE,
 CHORUS.

- MEN. Thy son, plac'd by thee in another house,
 By stealth, t' escape my daughter's eye, remov'd,
 I bring. Thy boast was that this hallow'd shrine,
 This image of the goddess, would to thee
 Give safety, and concealment to thy son.
 But, woman, it is found thy close-laid plans
 O'er-reach not me: and if this sacred ground
 Thou dost not leave, on him the death shall fall,
 Thy due: weigh this maturely: wilt thou die,
 Or shall he perish, for the heinous deeds
 With which my daughter thou hast wrong'd, and me?
- AND. Opinion, O opinion, many men
 Of slightest worth hast thou uplifted high
 In life's proud ranks. That glory, which by truth
 Is ratified, I reverence: that, which springs
 From erring falsehood, gives no solid grace,
 The wantonness of fortune all its boast.
 Didst thou, once marching with the chiefs of Greece,
 Take Troy from Priam, abject as thou art,
 Who at thy daughter's bidding, art thus fierce
 Against a child, and vauntest in mean strife
 With an unhappy woman, a poor slave?
 Unworthy thee to vanquish Troy I deem,
 And Troy unworthy by thy hand to fall.
 Those, who of worth the semblance only wear,
 Have splendid outsides, but within are found
 Like other men, save what of eminence
 They gain from wealth, for that hath mighty pow'r.
 But let us make this wordy contest short.
 Should I beneath thy daughter die, should she

Destroy me, never the polluting stain
Of blood would she escape: and the same guilt
Of murder by the many will on thee
Be charg'd; for, sharing in the deed, of guilt
Thou must have share. But if myself I save
So that I die not, will you slay my son?
And will his father tamely brook his death?
Not thus unmanly is he term'd at Troy.
Occasion hence hath call'd him; yet his deeds
Worthy of Peleus, worthy of his sire
Achilles will be found; and he will drive
Thy daughter from his house. Her shou'dst thou give
Again in nuptial rites, what wilt thou say?
That she of mild and modest manners flies
From a bad husband? This would not be true.
But who will wed her? Wilt thou in thy house
Keep her unwedded till her widow'd locks
Are hoary? Wretched man, dost thou not see
In what a torrent ills upon thee rush?
How many women wou'dst thou wish should wrong
Thy daughter's bed, e'er thou endure the ills
I speak of? Ill the chastening hand pursues
Small things with heavy vengeance: nor ought men,
If women are pernicious pests, to form
Their nature in resemblance of our sex.
Whether thy daughter I with baneful drugs
Working abortion, as she says, have hurt,
Free, unconstrain'd, not seeking at this shrine
Protection, to be tried by him I yield
My judge, to whom in marriage thou hast join'd her;
Nor for the wrong to him, for that his bed
I render'd childless, is less vengeance due
From him. Such is my nature: but from thine
I have one fear; thou in a woman's cause
Hast ruin'd the unhappy tow'rs of Troy.

CHOR. Thou with more boldness, than a woman ought
To men, hast spoken; thy indignant soul
Bears thee beyond the bounds of modesty.

MEN. Woman, these things are small, and, as thou say'st,
Beneath my royal dignity, beneath
The dignity of Greece: but know thou this,
What our necessities demand becomes
Of greater moment than to conquer Troy.
And to my daughter, (for of moment this
I deem,) that of her bed she be not reft,
My aid is due: all else, as lighter griefs,
Well may a woman bear; but what affects
The honour of her bed, affects her life.
He may command my slaves; and the same right
I, and my daughter, have o'er his; for friends,
We know what friendship is, no private claim
Indulge, but each with each in common share
What they possess. Should I neglect t' arrange,
Well as I may, my business, his return
Awaiting, I should be remiss, not wise.
But rise, this temple of the goddess quit,
For, if thou die, thy son escapes his fate;
If thou refuse to die, him will I slay:
This is inevitable, one shall die.

AND. Dreadful alternative! A cruel choice
Hast thou allow'd; unhappy, if I choose;
Not choosing, wretched: dreadful this! O thou,
In mighty vengeance for slight cause severe,
Hear me: Why dost thou kill me? for what crime?
What town have I betray'd? what child of thine
Have I made bleed? What house have I with flames
Destroy'd? A captive, to his bed my lord
Led me by force: yet him thou wilt not slay
Who wrought th' offence, but me; and from the cause
Unjustly turn thy fury on th' event.
Wretch that I am, what miseries weigh me down!
O my unhappy country! What dire ills
I suffer! What behov'd it me again
To be a mother, but with double grief
To load this grief? What joy hath life for me?
On which should I reflect, my present state,

Or my past fortunes? Hector I have seen
Slaughter'd, and dragg'd bound to the rolling car,
And Ilium blazing, piteous sight ! in flames.
I to the Grecian fleet was borne a slave,
Dragg'd by the hair ; and, when I reach'd the shore
Of Phthia, was compell'd to wed his son
Who slew my Hector. But my former woes
Why wail, nor rather turn my mournful thoughts,
And scan my present ills? I had one son
Yet left, a beam of light to cheer my life ;
Him they will kill who joy in things like these :
But for the sake of my unhappy life
He shall not die ; for there is hope in him,
If he shall be preserv'd ; and not to give
My life to save my son's, in me were base.
Behold I quit the altar, to your hands,
To murder, stab, bind, strangle me, resign'd.
Thy mother, O my son, that she may save
Thy life, descends to Pluto's dreary realms.
If thou escape from death, remember me,
Thy mother ; what I suffer'd, how I died
Remember : to thy father when thou goest,
'Midst thy caresses let thy warm tears flow,
Hang on his knees, and tell him all my wrongs :
For children are to all men life itself.
If he, who knows not what a parent feels,
Denies this, he hath less of anxious care,
But 'midst his bliss the soul's best pleasures wants.

CHOR. She moves my pity ; for misfortunes raise
A sympathetic grief in every breast,
Though the poor sufferer be of foreign race.
Well were it, king, wou'dst thou in concord join
Her and thy daughter, that her griefs may cease.

MEN. Seize her, slaves ; bind her hands : for she shall hear
Words of no pleasing sound. That thou might'st quit
This hallow'd altar to the goddess rais'd,
I made pretence to slay thy son, and thus
Wrought thee to come into my hands, to death

Devoted ; for most surely thou shalt die.
But of thy son my daughter shall decide,
To slay, or not to slay him, as her will
Inclines her. But go thou into this house,
That thou may'st learn with thy opprobrious taunts,
Slave as thou art, no more t' insult the free.

AND. Ah ! by thy guile, thy fraud, am I deceiv'd.

MEN. To all proclaim it : I deny it not.

AND. And is this wisdom on Eurotas' banks ?

MEN. Aye, and at Troy, ill actions to requite.

AND. Hath heav'n no gods, or none that will avenge ?

MEN. When that comes, we shall bear it : thou shalt die.

AND. And my poor child, torn from my sheltering wing.

MEN. No : of his life my daughter shall dispose.

AND. Alas, my son, how shall I mourn thy fate !

MEN. What, will thy hope in him no longer live ?

AND. O ye vile Spartans, most of all mankind
By all the world detested, train'd in wiles,
Supreme in falsehoods, artful to devise
Whate'er of mischief, dark in your designs
And intricate, unsafe, your thoughts involv'd
Maze within maze, unjustly hath your state
This eminence in Greece ! What is not yours
Of ill effective ? Are you not distain'd
With frequent murders, and intent on base
And shameful gains ? Are you not always found
To speak one thing, while other purposes
Are in your hearts conceal'd ? Perdition on you !
But death is not so terrible to me
As thou may'st think it : me disastrous fate
Then sunk when Phrygia's hapless city fell,
And my illustrious husband, whose strong spear
Oft made thee quit th' embattled field, and seek
Sad shelter in thy ships ; but standing now
A dreadful warrior 'gainst a woman, me
Thou killest : kill me : never shall my tongue
Deign with soft speech to sue to thee for grace,
Nor to thy daughter ; great though thou art now

At Sparta, I was once as great at Troy :
 If fortune now hath bow'd me to the dust,
 Vaunt not, her pow'r may bow thee down as low.

CHORUS.

- STRO. 1. Ne'er the divided bed of love
 Shall my assenting voice approve.
 Woe to the house, O man, that knows
 Sons who from diff'rent mothers rose :
 The sweet domestic joys of life
 Are chas'd away by tumult, rage, and strife :
 One bride then be content to wed,
 Nor let a rival share her bed.
- ANTIS. 1. Nor are states form'd in peace t' obey
 Two sceptres, and a double sway :
 Burden on burden then is borne,
 And the vex'd realm with faction torn.
 Nay, 'twixt two bards, whose raptur'd song
 Rolls the full tide of harmony along,
 Discord the Muses love to raise,
 Each envious of the other's praise.
- STRO. 2. High when the seas with boist'rous winds arise,
 Less safe the lab'ring vessel braves
 The fury of the swelling waves,
 Where many strive to steer her course, though wise,
 Than if one pilot's care presides,
 Though with less skill her helm he guides.
 Confusion from divided counsels flows ;
 The house one lord shall best obey,
 The state best own one ruler's sway ;
 Then each th' effect of prudent guidance knows.
- ANTIS. 2. This truth the daughter of the Spartan king
 Shall witness : for through fire and flame
 T' enjoy another's bed she came ;
 Then whilst her heart vindictive passions sting,
 Rages th' unhappy dame of Troy,
 And her poor infant to destroy
 Wild and tempestuous jealousy is found,

Nor gods, nor laws, nor grace it heeds:
Yet, royal lady, for these deeds
Repentance shall thy soul with anguish wound.

Together see that pair before the house
To death adjudg'd. Unhappy dame! and thou,
Unhappy son, who for thy mother's bed,
Though in the fault no share is thine, nor charge
Of aught offending 'gainst thy lords, shalt die!

AND. Bound in these galling chains, behold, my hands
Thus bleeding, I am sent beneath the earth.

MOL. My mother, O my mother, I too go,
Beneath thy wing, a victim to their hate.
Ye potent lords of Phthia's realm, O come,
My father come, and aid thy suffering friends!

AND. Thou, my lov'd child, on thy dead mother's breast
Beneath the earth a lifeless corse shalt lie.

MOL. Ah me, unhappy me, what woe is mine!
Thou too, my mother, hast thy share of woe.

MEN. Hence to the realms of darkness; for you came
From hostile tow'rs: beneath a twofold force
You die: thy doom is by my voice denounc'd,
And by Hermione thy son's: the height
Of madness were it to spare foes from foes
Descended, when the pow'r presents itself
To kill them, and to free our house from fear.

AND. My husband, O my husband, noble son
Of Priam, O that to mine aid thy hand
Were present now, and thy protecting spear!

MOL. Unhappy me, what words, what suasive strain
Shall I now find of pow'r t' avert my fate?

AND. Go to thy lord, hang on his knees, my son,
With suppliant word entreat him.

MOL. Oh, be kind,
Be kind to me, relent, and spare my life!

AND. This melts me, and mine eyes are moist with tears,
As drops the sunless rock, unhappy me!

MOL. What shall I find, ah me, what remedy

Effectual to relieve me from my ills !

MEN. Why dost thou roll thee at my knees ? why thus
Address thy pray'rs to me ? Th' assailing wave
Moves not the rock. My children claim my aid ;
Nothing of tenderness I feel for thee ;
For great part of my life I spent to take
Troy and thy mother : her shalt thou enjoy,
And with her to th' infernal Pluto go.

CHOR. The royal Peleus I behold, with speed
His aged foot advancing ; he is here.

PELEUS, MENELAUS, ANDROMACHE,
MOLOSSUS, CHORUS.

PEL. To you my question I address, and thee
Enforcing slaughter, what means this, and whence
Proceeds it ? What disease infects the house ?
Why, e'er the law gives sentence, are these deeds
Attempted ? Menelaus, forbear, nor haste
The uncondemn'd to punish.—With more speed
Lead thou ; for this affair, it seems, delay
Admits not. Now, if ever, I could wish
The strength of youth restor'd. But in her sails
First I will breathe a fav'ring gale. Inform me
What justice pleading these have bound thy hands
In chains, and lead thee and thy son away :
For in my absence, and thy lord's, to death
Thee, like a sheep, with her poor lamb, they drag.

AND. Age-honour'd king, thus, as thou seest, they lead
Me and my son to death. What shall I say ?
Not once alone, but many messengers
Earnest I sent to call thee. Thou hast heard
Perchance what discord rages in the house
Rais'd by his daughter : and for this I die.
Now from the shrine of Thetis, who to thee
Brought forth thy noble son, and whom thou holdest
In reverence high, they lead me dragg'd by force,
Nor course of justice hold, nor their return
Await, who from the house are absent now,

But knowing me defenceless, and my son,
Whom, though in nought offending, they to death
Doom with his wretched mother. But, O king,
An humble suppliant at thy knees I fall,
Thy reverend beard these chains forbid my hand
To stroke, protect me, by the gods I beg,
Oh save me! but if not, my death, to me
Calamitous, on you will bring disgrace.

PEL. Unbind her, I command you; from her hands
Take off the chains, or some of you shall rue it.

MEN. And I forbid it, one in nought to thee
Inferior, but, o'er her of greater pow'r.

PEL. What, art thou come to lord it in my house,
O'er those at Sparta not content to rule?

MEN. At Troy she was the captive of my spear.

PEL. But giv'n an honour'd prize to Phthia's chief.

MEN. Have not I pow'r o'er his, and he o'er mine?

PEL. For good, not ill, nor to be slain by force.

MEN. Her from my hand thou never shalt withdraw.

PEL. Beneath this sceptre then thy head shall bleed.

MEN. Touch me, or come but near me, thou shalt know——

PEL. Shalt thou 'mongst men be reckon'd, thou most vile,
And from the vile descended? What hast thou
Of manly, by a Phrygian who thy bride
Didst lose, thy house unbarr'd, unguarded left,
As if thy wife, the worst of all her sex,
Knew what discretion was? Nor, were her will
Dispos'd, could one of Sparta's female race
Be modest, where the virgins quit the house,
And with uncinctur'd vests and naked thighs
Mix with young men contending in the race,
And share th' athletic sports, not, as I think,
To be allow'd: what marvel if thus train'd
Your daughters are not chaste? This should be ask'd
Of Helen, who forsook her nuptial bed,
Wantonly wand'ring to a foreign land
With a young stranger. For her sake in arms
Assembled all those numerous pow'rs of Greece

Thou ledd'st to Troy: her with disdain to quit
Behov'd thee more, and, having found her false,
Not to have stirr'd a spear, but let her there
Remain, nay e'en to have added a reward,
That thou might'st never take her home again.
Yet with no prosperous gale didst thou pursue
Thy fond desire, but, many noble lives
Destroy'd, make mothers childless in their house,
And hoary fathers of their generous sons
Deprive, of whom, unhappy, I am one:
For as the murderer of Achilles thee,
Like some Tartarean pest that joys in blood,
I view. Unwounded thee alone from Troy
Greece saw return'd, and in their splendid case
Thy splendid arms, as they were thither borne,
Brought back. Before his nuptials oft my voice
Gave him monition not to form with thee
Alliance, nor receive within his house
From a bad mother one that had her birth:
For such bring with them all their mother's faults.
Ye wooers, this your fix'd attention claims,
Daughters of virtuous mothers make your brides.
Besides, thy brother basely didst thou wrong,
Impelling him most foolishly to slay
His daughter; such thy fear lest thy base wife
Thou shou'dst not gain. When thou hadst vanquish'd Tr
For that I now must mention, and thy wife
A captive was deliver'd to thy hands,
Thou didst not kill her, but her beauteous breast
Soon as thou saw'st, thou threw'st thy sword away,
And with a kiss receiv'dst her, making court
To the unblushing traitress, thou most vile,
Master'd by wanton appetite. And next
To my son's house thou cam'st, and spreading there
Thy ravage, in his absence without shame
Murderest a wretched woman, and her son,
Who though of spurious birth, shall make thee rue,
Aye, and thy daughter too, your base attempt.

For oft the thirsty land will teem with grain
 Richer than harvests on a deeper soil:
 And of the spurious sons in worth excel
 Those of legitimate birth. Vaunt not thyself,
 But bear thy daughter hence. A man allied
 To one of meaner rank, if faithful, finds
 More honour than from those, who proudly boast
 Their greatness: but to nothing hast thou claim.
 HOR. The tongue from small beginnings raises strife,
 Till it exceeds all bounds; but caution curbs
 The prudent from contention with their friends.
 EN. Why of the aged should we speak as wise,
 Once with sage counsels guiding Greece? When thou,
 The honour'd Peleus, of illustrious birth
 And high alliance, utter'st words, which cast
 Shame on thyself, and high reproach on us,
 For a barbaric woman, whom to chase
 Beyond the streams of Nile, beyond the banks
 Of Phasis, nor to cease exciting me,
 Behoves thee more, as one of Asia's realms,
 Where many sons of Greece lie stretch'd in death
 Beneath the spear, not guiltless of the blood
 Of thy brave son; for Paris, by whose hand
 Thy son, Achilles, fell, was Hector's brother,
 She Hector's wife: yet dost thou deign with her
 Beneath one roof to lodge, with her to share
 One table, and permittest her to bear
 Sons in the house most hateful to my soul.
 Her, through my provident care for thee, old man,
 And for myself, when I would put to death,
 She from my hands is forc'd away. But come,
 To reason with thee nought of base inferences,
 Nought of reproach: If from my daughter springs
 No child, and sons sprout from her bed, the lords
 Of Phthia wilt thou make them? Shall they reign
 O'er Grecians, they, sprung from barbaric race?
 Am I unwise then hating things unjust,
 And hast thou claim to wisdom? Nay, revolve

This in thy mind, thy daughter hadst thou giv'n
 In marriage to some youth of Phthia's realm,
 Had she been treated thus, wou'dst thou sit down
 In silence? Otherwise of thee I deem.
 Yet for a stranger 'gainst thy friends, allied
 By nearest ties, reproaches dost thou vent.
 The wife hath with the husband equal right,
 If wrong'd by him; save that the man, whose house
 Is by his wife's immodest folly sham'd,
 In his own hands hath ample pow'r; but she
 Seeks through her parents, and her friends, redress.
 Just is it then that I my daughter aid.
 Old age, old age is on thee: when thy tongue
 Mentions the martial pow'rs I led to war,
 More honour than from silence I receive.
 Th' offence of Helen sprung not from her will,
 But from the gods: yet this to Greece hath wrought
 Advantage high, and rais'd her sons, before
 Unskill'd in arms and inexpert in war,
 To martial prowess: for each science best
 Man from experience learns. If, when my wife
 Was brought into my sight, I check'd my hand,
 And slew her not, my mind obey'd the rule
 Of temperate wisdom: and I wish thy hand
 Had not slain Phocus. These things have I urg'd
 At large, benevolent to thee, old man,
 And not through anger: but if rage inflames
 Thy mind, th' intemperance of thy tongue may rise
 Yet higher; me a provident care avails.

CHOR. Forbear these vain and angry words, for this
 Were better far, lest both be in the wrong.

783. Phocus was also the son of Æacus. Pausanias mentions his tomb, and says that a rough stone lies upon it, the same which Peleus and Telamon used for a disk in the exercises of the Pentathlon, to which they had invited their brother: when Peleus in his turn came to try his strength, he designedly hurled this stone against Phocus, and killed him. Peleus and Telamon committed this base action to gratify their mother, who was the daughter of Sciron: the mother of Phocus was the sister of Thetis. *Pausan. Corinthiac.*

PEL. How ill this custom hath through Greece obtain'd
A sanction ! When the trophies of their foes
A conquering host erects, they are not deem'd
Th' achievement of their hands who toil'd in fight,
But the renown their leader bears away,
Who amidst thousands shook a single spear,
Nor more than one perform'd, yet he obtains
More glory. So in states those, who sit high,
To civil pow'r exalted, swell in thought,
As wiser than the people, though to worth
They have no claim ; for thousands might be found
'Mongst these more wise, had they but confidence,
And will to shew their pow'rs : in proof of this,
Thou and thy brother your high state assume,
Elated by your proud command in arms,
And triumph over Troy, by the brave deeds
And toils of others rais'd. But I will shew thee
That not Idæan Paris I esteem
A greater foe of Peleus, if this house
Thou quit not with all speed, and take with thee
Thy childless daughter ; else the chief from me
Descended hence will drive her, by the hair
Dragg'd through his house. A mother's joys to her
Unknown, the fruitful bed she will not brook :
But shall she make us childless, through mischance
If with a child she never hath been bless'd ?
Stand from her, slaves, that I may know who dares
Oppose me, whilst I free her hands from chains.
Hold up thy head, and be assur'd that I,
Though trembling, will untie these twisted bonds.
O thou most vile, thus cou'dst thou gall these hands ?
Some bull or lion didst thou ween in links
Thus strain'd to bind ; or fear lest she should seize
A sword, and drive thee off ? Come hither, child,
Beneath my arms unbind thy mother's chains :
In Phthia I will nurture thee, to these
A mighty foe. Except your boast in arms,
Your martial pride, you Spartans in nought else

An excellence unknown to others claim.

CHOR. Old age is hasty, soon to choler mov'd,
And, while that lasts, impatient of control.

MEN. Thou to reproach with headlong rage art borne;
But I at Phthia will by violence
Do nothing wrong, nor bear it. A long stay
My leisure now allows not: I return;
For near to Sparta is a state once join'd
In friendly league, now bent on hostile deeds:
'Gainst this my warlike forces I will lead,
And bend them to obedience: all things there
Establish'd as I would, I will with speed
Revisit Phthia, and, its chief return'd,
Inform him face to face what are my thoughts,
And be inform'd what his are: if inclin'd
To punish her, and shew respect to us
In future, like respect shall he receive:
If angry, he shall find an anger high
As his, and deeds responding to his deeds.

What thou canst say I bear unmov'd; a voice
Indeed is thine; but as a shadow void
Of active pow'r, thou canst do nought but talk.
PEL. Go forward, child, beneath my sheltering arms,
And thou, unhappy dame: the raging storm
Escap'd, in harbour thou art now secure.

AND. O reverend king, may the gods pour on thee
Their blessings, and on thine, for that my son
And me, a wretched woman, from base wrong
Thou hast protected; yet take heed, lest now
Crouching in ambush on the desert road
By force they bear me off, thy hoary age
Perceiving and my weakness, and my son
An infant: weigh these things; lest our escape
Avail us nothing, if hereafter seiz'd.

PEL. Do not inforce a woman's fears on me.
Go: who shall touch you? He, who dares, shall weep
For, so the gods have grac'd me, troops of horse
And numerous foot at Phthia I command.

I too am firm in strength, nor, as thou deem'st,
 With years enfeebled: should I only look
 On such a man, old as I am, of him
 A trophy I should raise: for many youths
 An old man, if his courage glows, excels:
 A dastard what doth strength of limb avail?

CHORUS.

STRO. 'Twere better not to have been born,
 If we derive not our pure blood
 From honour'd parents great and good,
 Whose splendid house rich stores adorn.
 The nobly-born against the storms of fate
 Find friendly pow'rs to guard their state;
 Honour and fame the great and good attend,
 Nor with their life their glories end;
 Not time itself hath force t' efface
 Immortal Virtue's radiant grace.

ANTIS. 'Twere better conquest not to gain,
 Where evil fame attends its course,
 When malice and unrighteous force
 Proud o'er insulted justice reign:
 This may be sweet to man for one brief day,
 The next its glories fade away,
 And infamy breathes baleful blasts around.
 Glorious that house, that state is found,
 Where pow'r usurps no harsh command,
 Till awful justice arms its hand.

EPOD. Age-honour'd king, whose gen'rous blood
 Derives from Æacus its source,
 Thou, when the Lapithæ embattled stood,
 And the fierce Centaurs shook the dreadful spear,
 Stood'st foremost in the dang'rous war,
 Dauntless in arms to quell their monstrous force.
 Thee too the gallant Argo bore
 The black inhospitable Euxine o'er,
 Through clashing rocks, whose threat'ning brow
 Frowns o'er the roaring deep below.

When first Alcides to the ground
 Vindictive bow'd Troy's rampir'd pride,
 And spread the raging slaughter wide,
 Was Peleus then inactive found?
 *Eurotas heard thy honour'd name
 Equall'd with Jove's illustrious son's in fame.

FEMALE ATTENDANT, CHORUS.

ATT. My much-lov'd friends, how ills succeed to ills
 This day! My royal mistress in the house,
 Hermione, forsaken by her father,
 And conscious of her deeds, th' attempt to kill
 Andromache and her poor child, is bent
 To die, her husband fearing, lest with shame
 She from the house, for what is done, be driv'n,
 Or suffer death, intending death to those
 Whom it had ill besëem'd her to have slain.
 Scarce from the fatal noose the slaves, her guards,
 Restrain her, from her hand scarce wrench the sword;
 Such deep despondence rends her trembling heart,
 Conscious of deeds which honour cannot own.
 I am quite spent, my friends, restraining her
 From acts of desperation: go you in,
 And save her from her violent attempts:
 For with more influence the new-arriv'd
 Enforce persuasion, than domestic friends.

CHOR. The cry of the attendants in the house
 We hear, thy words confirming; and she soon,
 Unhappy lady, will give proof how high
 Her sorrow swells for her atrocious deeds;
 For forth she rushes, from her servants' hands
 Bursting by force; such her desire to die.

HERMIONE, ATTENDANT, CHORUS.

HERM. Oh wretched; wretched me! thus will I rend
 My tresses, with my nails thus tear my cheeks.

* A river of Thessaly.

- ATT. What wilt thou do, my child? destroy thy form?
- HERM. Thus from my hair my finely-textur'd veil
I rend, and toss it to the winds of heav'n.
- ATT. Cover thy breasts, my child, compose thy robes.
- HERM. Why should I cover with my robes my breasts?
What I have done is to my husband's eye
Uncover'd, unconceal'd, conspicuous, clear.
- ATT. Springs from thy rival's purpos'd death thy grief?
- HERM. That hostile, that audacious deed distracts
My soul: ah me accurs'd, by men accurs'd!
- ATT. Thy husband will forgive thee that offence.
- HERM. Ah, from my hands why didst thou wrest the sword?
Give it me back, give it me back, my friend,
That I may plunge it deep into my breast.
Why from the strangling cord dost thou restrain me?
- ATT. Should I then leave thee, reft of sense, to die?
- HERM. Alas my fate! Where is the welcome flame
That blazes to consume me? From what height
Shall I plunge headlong in the sea beneath,
Or cast me from the mountain's woody steep
That I may die, and join the pitying shades?
- ATT. Why this impassion'd grief? Affliction knows
Its hour, heav'n-sent, all mortals to attend.
- HERM. My father, thou hast left me, left me here
Like a wreck'd vessel, destitute of oars,
Driv'n on the lonely strand; and ruin soon,
Ruin will reach me. In that house, which once
A bride I enter'd, I shall dwell no more.
A suppliant to whose statues shall I fly?
Or, sentenc'd to quit Phthia, fall a slave
At a slave's knees? Oh that I were a bird
Of dusky wing, or the swift bark, which first
Brav'd the rough Euxine, and its clashing rocks!
- ATT. Thy violence, my child, I did not praise
Before, which wrong'd the Trojan dame; nor now
That violence of fear which shakes thy soul.
Nor will thy husband thy alliance spurn,
Persuaded by th' insidious, glozing words

Of a barbaric woman; for he holds thee
 Not as a prize of war from conquer'd Troy;
 The daughter of a man for worth renown'd,
 With a rich dowry, from a state that boasts
 No small degree of glory, as his bride
 Thee he receiv'd. Nor will thy father thus
 Betray thee, as thy fears suggest, my child,
 Nor let thee suffer wrong. But go thou in,
 Thyself to public view before the house
 Expose not, lest thou wake reproach, my child.

CHOR. This way with hasty steps a stranger bends,
 His habit marks him from some foreign land.

ORESTES, HERMIONE, CHORUS.

ORES. Ye female strangers, say, is this the house,
 The royal mansion of Achilles' son?

CHOR. It is: but this enquiring who art thou?

ORES. The son of Agamemnon and his queen,
 My name Orestes: to the oracle
 Of Dodonæan Jove I hold my way.
 Since I am come to Phthia, where resides
 A lady near allied to me by blood,
 Whether she lives, and fortune's fav'ring smile
 Enjoys, affection prompts me to enquire:
 Hermione of Sparta; though she dwells
 In realms from us remote, she yet is dear.

HERM. O son of Agamemnon, from the storm
 Thou art an harbour to the lab'ring bark:
 An humble suppliant at thy knees I beg,
 Have pity on me, for thou seest my state
 Not happy; 'round thy knees my arms I twine,
 Not of less potency than hallow'd wreaths.

ORES. Ha! What means this? Doth some illusion mock
 My sense, or Phthia's queen do I behold
 Indeed, the daughter of the Spartan king?

HERM. Me, and me only in my father's house,
 Be thou assur'd, did Spartan Helen bear.

ORES. O Phœbus, healing pow'r, relieve these ills!

Flow thy afflictions from the gods, or men ?

HERM. Some from myself, and from my husband some,
Some from the gods : on all sides ruin threatens.

ORES. Whence to a woman, who no child hath borne,
Can sorrow rise, save for her injur'd bed ?

HERM. Thence is my grief : well dost thou prompt my tongue.

ORES. Another loves thy lord, estrang'd from thee ?

HERM. The captive wife of Hector shares his bed.

ORES. This is foul wrong, that one man take two wives.

HERM. E'en thus it is : and then I sought revenge.

ORES. On her a woman's vengeance didst thou seek ?

HERM. Death to herself, and to her spurious son.

ORES. Is she then slain, or snatch'd by chance from death ?

HERM. By Peleus, fav'ring her unrighteous cause.

ORES. Hadst thou who bore in this attempt a share ?

HERM. My father, who for this from Sparta came.

ORES. Was he defeated by the old man's hand ?

HERM. By shame : forsaken he hath left me here.

ORES. Thy husband for th' attempt, I see, thou fearest.

HERM. Well dost thou judge ; for me he will destroy,
And justly : what behoves me else to say ?
But I conjure thee, and invoke high Jove,
From whom we draw our race, convey me far,
Far from this land, or to my father's house :
For e'en these walls, had they a voice, I think,
Would drive me hence, and all the realm of Phthia
Detests me. Leaving the oracular shrine
Of Phœbus, should my husband first return
Home, he will kill me for my shameful deeds,
Or to the spurious bed, o'er which my pow'r
Was sovereign once, I shall be made a slave.

ORES. What led thee then, forgive the word, t' offend ?

HERM. The converse of bad women ruin'd me ;
Who oft address'd me with this unsound speech,
" Wilt thou permit a captive, a base slave,
" To dwell beneath thy roof, and share thy bed ?
" By heav'n's dread empress, in my house the light
" Of yon bright sun a rival should not see."

I to these Sirens lent my easy ears,
 These specious, versatile, insidious pests.
 And rais'd to folly's gale my swelling thoughts:
 For why behov'd it me with awe to view
 My husband? All things, which became my state,
 Were mine; abundant wealth was mine; my house
 I, as it pleas'd me, rul'd; I might have borne
 Legitimate offspring, whilst her sons to mine
 Had been half-slaves. But never, more than once
 Let me repeat it, never let the wise
 Give females licence to frequent his house,
 And hold free converse with his wife; for these
 To ill are shrewd instructors: through the hope
 Of sordid lucre one corrupts his wife:
 One, who hath fall'n from virtue, like herself
 Wishes to make her vile; and many urge
 Through wanton frowardness their pleas to ill:
 Hence the pure fountain of domestic bliss
 The husband finds polluted: these against
 Let him guard well his gates with locks and bolts;
 For nothing good these female visitants
 Work by their converse, but abundant ill.

CHOR. 'Gainst thine own sex too freely hath thy tongue
 Inveigh'd; yet this may be forgiv'n thee now:
 But woman woman's nature should commend.

ORES. Wisdom was his, who first instructed man
 In person of affairs to be inform'd.
 I, knowing the confusion of this house,
 And all the variance 'twixt thee and the wife
 Of Hector, waited not, with cold regard
 Attending, to be told thy will, if here
 T' abide, or, dreading with well-grounded fear
 A captive woman, to withdraw thee hence;
 But came, not waiting thy commands, if such
 Thy cause of grief as I have heard from thee,
 To bear thee from this house; for thou wast mine
 Before, though by thy father's falseness now
 Thou dwellest with this man: for e'er he march'd

Against the Trojan state, to me he pledg'd
 Thy hand in marriage; afterwards to him,
 Who calls thee now his wife, he promis'd thee,
 If he would lay the tow'rs of Troy in dust.
 To Phthia when the victor chief return'd,
 Him, for thy father patient I forgave.
 Thy nuptials to relinquish I implor'd,
 Urging my fortunes, and the vengeful pow'rs
 Who then afflicted me; that I perchance
 Among my friends, by blood allied, might wed,
 A grace from strangers to an outcast wretch,
 Outcast like me, not easily indulg'd:
 My suit his fiery insolence rejects,
 Upbraids me with the murder of my mother,
 And the grim-visag'd furies. In despair,
 For then the fortunes of my house were low,
 I griev'd indeed, but silent bore my grief
 With my afflictions sunk, and went away
 Of thee, against my soul's warm wish, depriv'd.
 But now, since thou hast found a wayward change
 Of fortune, and thy heart desponding sinks,
 I from this house will lead thee, guard thee well,
 And give thee to thy father's hand; for strong
 The bond of kindred, and in ills no zeal
 Is warmer than a friend's by blood allied.

HERM. To what concerns my marriage with due care
 My father will attend: it is not mine
 That to determine. But with quickest speed
 Convey me hence; lest, should he first return,
 My lord prevent me; or, should Peleus learn
 From his son's house that I have made escape,
 He with his fleetest horse pursue my flight.

ORES. Let not the old man's pow'r alarm thy fears;
 Nor dread Achilles' son, whose fiery pride
 Insulted me: th' entangling toils of fate,
 Through which he cannot burst, are by this hand
 Fix'd against him: these I explain not now,
 But their effect the Delian rock shall know.

This murderer of his mother, if the oaths
 Of my brave friends hold in the Pythian land
 Their faith, shall shew him he did wrong to wed
 One first to me betroth'd; and he shall rue
 His call for vengeance for his father's death
 On royal Phœbus; nor avails him now
 His thought to reverence chang'd; for by the god,
 And through my just resentment, he shall die
 A wretched death, and feel my enmity.
 For the god gives the fate of foes to change
 Revers'd, nor pride's aspiring thoughts endures.

CHORUS.

STRO. 1. O Phœbus, who round Ilium's lofty town
 With tow'rs the rampir'd walls didst crown:
 And thou, dread monarch of the main,
 By azure steeds whirl'd o'er thy wat'ry reign,
 To ruin why those tow'rs consign,
 The labour of your hands divine?
 Why to the war-skill'd Mars a prey
 The wretched, wretched Troy betray?

ANTIS. 1. You on the banks of Simois to the car
 Yok'd many a courser train'd to war;
 You caus'd the purple fight to glow,
 From which no laurel grac'd the warrior's brow.
 The Dardan monarchs are no more;
 Low, low they lie, distain'd with gore.
 In Troy from blazing altars rise
 No clouds of incense to the skies.

STRO. 2. Low is the son of Atreus laid,
 By his wife's hand his blood was spilt;
 And for his blood her life she paid,
 Her son th' avenger of her guilt;
 The god, the god, with dread command
 Arm'd 'gainst her life his chast'ning hand:
 The son obey'd th' oracular shrine:
 He did the deed,
 Then fled with speed,

And in the hallow'd temple stain'd with blood
The murd'rer of his mother stood.

Can this be true, O Phœbus, pow'r divine?

NTIS. 2. In Greece how many mothers sigh,
And pour the joyless notes of woe,
Wailing their hapless sons, that lie
Beneath the Phrygian rampires low!
And many from their widow'd bed
Distress'd to other mansions fled.
On Greece, on Greece the tempest fell:

Nor thine alone

To heave the groan,

Nor thy friends only did its rage destroy;

But o'er the fertile fields of Troy

Roll'd, dropping blood, the thund'ring storm of hell.

PELEUS, CHORUS.

EL. To my enquiry, dames of Phthia, give
Faithful reply: for rumour wide hath spread,
Though indistinct the tale, that from this house
The daughter of the Spartan king is fled.
Through strong desire to know if this be true
I come: the fortunes of their absent friends
Those who remain at home should make their care.

HOR. What thou hast heard, O king, is true; nor me
Becomes it to conceal the ills, which 'round
Inclose me: from the house the queen is fled.

EL. Of what afraid? Relate to me the whole.

HOR. Dreading her husband, lest he hence should chase her.

EL. For her severe design to kill his son?

HOR. She further fear'd the captive Trojan dame.

EL. How fled she? with her father? or with whom?

HOR. The son of Agamemnon bore her hence.

EL. Led by what hope? Hath he a wish to wed her?

HOR. And thy son's son he forms designs to kill.

EL. By secret fraud, or in fair fight oppos'd?

HOR. By Delphians, in Apollo's sacred shrine.

EL. Ah, this is to be dreaded. One of you

Fly to the Pythian shrine with swiftest speed,
 To our friends there each circumstance relate,
 Of what hath happen'd here, e'er by his foes
 The brave son of Achilles basely fall.

MESSENGER, PELEUS, CHORUS.

MESS. Ah, what unhappy tidings do I bear
 To thee, old man, and all that love my lord !

PEL. My mind presages as expecting ill.

MESS. That ill, O reverend Peleus, thou must know.
 Thy son's son is no more, slain by the swords
 Deep-wounding of the Delphians, led by one
 A stranger of Mycenæ.

CHOR. Ha, old man,
 What wilt thou do? Nay, fall not; raise thyself.

PEL. Oh, I am nothing; lost, quite lost; my voice
 Fails me, my trembling limbs beneath me fail.

MESS. Hear me; if by thy friends thou wou'dst revenge
 The murd'rous deed, thus sink not; raise thy head.

PEL. O fate, how heavy dost thou fall on me,
 Thus trembling on the extreme verge of age !
 How fell the only son of him who was
 My only son? I wish yet dread to hear.

MESS. When to Apollo's glorious land we came,
 Three bright returns of yon high-beaming sun
 We gave to view the wonders of the place.
 This 'woke suspicion; and in crowds convened
 Those who dwell there, the people of the god.
 The son of Agamemnon through the town
 Insidious went, instilling in each ear
 Speeches that raise distrust, "Behold you him,
 "Who through the vaulted caverns of the god
 "With gold, the treasur'd gifts of mortals, stor'd,
 "Observant walks; a second time he comes,
 "The same his purpose as before, to spoil
 "The temple of the god." Hence gaining force
 Malignant rumour through the city flow'd:
 The rulers of the state in council oft,

And oft in private met, all, whose high charge
Presided o'er the treasures of the god,
And in the pillar'd dome appoint a guard.
Of this not yet inform'd, the victims fed
Where high Parnassus waves his leafy groves.
Receiv'd, we nigh the altar stood, with those
Whose guests we were, and with the Pythian seers.
Then one thus spoke, What shall we ask the gods
For thee, young man? What brings thee to this shrine?
I for my past offence, my lord replied,
Would make atonement to the god, on whom
I call'd for vengeance for my father's death.
The rumour by Orestes spread then shew'd
All its malignant pow'r, as if my lord
Had utter'd falsehood, and with base intents
To Delphi came: within the temple's verge
He enter'd, that before th' oracular seat
His suppliant vows he might to Phœbus pour,
And then beside the blazing victims stood.
Here arm'd with swords a band in ambush lay
Beneath the laurel's shade: of these the son
Of Clytemnestra, whose nefarious mind
Plann'd all this horrid treachery, was one.
Standing in open view my lord address'd
His vows to Phœbus; they with pointed swords
Advancing thrust at him unarm'd; he steps
Backwards, for yet he chanc'd no mortal wound
To have receiv'd, and from a pillar's height
Snatching the arms there hung, with dauntless port,
A warrior now in martial terrors clad,
Stood at the altar, and thus cries aloud,
Wherefore, ye sons of Delphi, would ye kill me?
Hither my steps were holy: for what cause
Am I destroy'd? Though numbers there were nigh,
Not one replied; but from their hands hurl'd stones.
He, by the storm like thickest hail assail'd,
Held forth his arms, his shield on this side now,
On that side now opposing, wards the strokes,

Yet nought avail'd; for many darts at once,
Arrows, spears, javelins, all the weapons us'd
In sacrifice, the ground before him strew;
Thou wou'dst have marvell'd hadst thou seen him bound,
The darts avoiding: but when now they press'd
T' inclose him round, nor gave him breathing time,
He left the altar's victim-sated hearth,
And bounding furious with the dance of Troy
Rush'd on them: they, like trembling doves that see
The hawk pursuing, turn their backs in flight;
Many promiscuous fall, some by their wounds,
Some in the strait pass trampled under foot;
And from the hallow'd dome unhallow'd cries
The rocks re-echo'd: like a cloudless sky
My lord in glittering arms refulgent stood,
Till from the middle of the shrine one sent
A loud and horrid shout, and fir'd his troops
To courage, turning them from flight: then fell
The brave son of Achilles; through his sides
A Delphian driving his sharp-pointed sword,
With many others, slew him. To the ground
Soon as he fell, who did not plunge his sword?
Who did not hurl, and dash him with a stone?
Till all his beauteous form with savage wounds
Was mangled. But his breathless corse, which lay
Stretch'd nigh the altar, from the incens'd shrine
By them cast forth, we snatch'd with speed away
Borne in our arms, and hither bring to thee,
That thou, old man, may'st heave the groan of grief,
Bathe it with tears, and grace it with a tomb.
'Thus hath the king, whose voice declares the fates
The judge to all mankind of what is just,
Pour'd vengeance on Achilles' suffering son,
Like a malignant mortal old debates
Bearing in memory: how then is he wise?
CHOR. And see, the king, borne from the Delphic land,
Advances to the house. Unhappy he,
Who suffer'd thus: unhappy too, old man,

Art thou: for thou receiv'st the lion-son
 Of thy Achilles, not as thou dost wish:
 And thou, on losses and afflictions fall'n,
 Art fall'n with him beneath one common fate.

PEL. Wretch that I am, what an affliction this,
 Which here I see, and bear into my house!
 My heart is rent with sorrow. O thou state
 Of Thessaly, on me hath ruin fall'n,
 And desolation: I have now no race,
 I have no child remaining in my house.
 Cruel misfortune! On what friend mine eye
 Shall I now cast, to find in him a joy?
 O that dear mouth! those cheeks, those hands, how dear!
 Better have died beneath the walls of Troy,
 And on the banks of Simois found thy fate!

CHOR. He would have then been honour'd in his death;
 And lighter sorrows had been thine, old man.

PEL. O nuptials, fatal nuptials! You have brought
 Destruction on this house, and on my state!
 Ah miserable me! Would that my house,
 Unhappy through thy marriage bed, my son,
 Had ne'er receiv'd Hermione, a bride
 Fatal to thee! Would she had perish'd first,
 That pest of hell, with blasting thunder struck!
 Oh that thou ne'er hadst charg'd thy father's blood,
 Thy noble father by his arrows slain,
 On Phœbus, nor his vengeful pow'r inflam'd,
 A mortal thou contending with the god!

CHOR. O woe, woe, woe! I will begin the strain,
 And wail my dead lord with funereal notes.

PEL. O woe, woe, woe! I to thy mournful notes
 Weeping reply, a poor, distress'd old man.

CHOR. The god, the god and fate have wrought these woes.

PEL. O thou most dear, ah me! ah me! my house
 Hast thou left desolate, forsaking me
 Childless, unhappy, in my hoary age!

CHOR. Thou shou'dst have died, old man, before thy sons.

PEL. Shall I not rend my hair, and beat my head

In anguish for my loss? For, O my state,
Me of two sons Apollo hath depriv'd!

CHOR. O thou, that hast beheld and suffer'd ills,
Wretched old man, what now must be thy life?

PEL. Childless, forsaken, finding to my ills
No end, my woes will wait me to the tomb.

CHOR. Blest in thy nuptials by the gods in vain.

PEL. Those blessings all are vanish'd, lost in air,
And of their glories not a trace remains.

CHOR. Thou wilt live lonely in a lonely house.

PEL. My state is now no more a state to me:
Farewell my sceptre, to the ground I throw thee.
And thou, O Nymph, dwelling in secret caves,
Daughter of Nereus, shalt behold me sunk
In total ruin, prostrate on the earth.

CHOR. Ah me, what means this motion? I perceive
Some pow'r divine: look, virgins, look: some god,
Borne through the ether in yon silver cloud,
Enters the plains of Phthia fam'd for steeds.

THET. Peleus, this grace thy former nuptials claim,
Leaving her father's house thy Thetis comes,
And first exhorts thee for thy present ills
Not to indulge excess of grief. E'en I,
Who for my children ought not to have dew'd
Mine eyes with tears, have lost my son by thee,
The swift Achilles, noblest of the Greeks.
Now for what cause I came I will declare;
Do thou attend. This dead son of Achilles
Entomb, but bear him to the Pythian shrine,
To Delphi a disgrace, as, buried there,
His monument will witness the foul deed
Committed by Orestes' murderous hand.
In the Molossian land the captive dame,
Andromache, must dwell, with holy rites
Wedded to Helenus; and that her son,
The sole remaining pledge of the high race
Of Æacus: the crown is his: from him

A long successive line of kings shall rise,
 And in Molossia hold th' imperial pow'r
 With glory: for thy race, old man, and mine,
 Must not in total ruin sink, nor Troy's,
 For to the gods she yet is dear, though low
 In dust by hostile Pallas lie her tow'rs.
 But thee, that thou may'st know what grace attends
 My bed, a goddess born, a god my sire,
 I from the ills of mortal life will free,
 And give thee immortality: thenceforth
 Thou in the house of Nereus shalt reside
 A god with me a goddess: thence, thy foot
 Unmoisten'd with the ocean waves, thy son
 And mine, the lov'd Achilles, thou shalt see
 Residing in his insular domain,
 The promontory Leuce, which o'erhangs
 The Euxine straits. Go then, to Delphi built
 By hands divine bear this dead body, there
 Entomb it: thence the cave of Sepias, form'd
 By beating billows in the ancient rock,
 Revisit; there await me, till my train
 Of fifty Nereids from the sea I bring
 To lead thee thence; for thou must bear what fate
 Decrees; and this the will of Jove. But cease
 Thy sorrows for the dead: for from the gods
 Long hath this fatal sentence been decreed
 To all the race of mortals, they must die.
 Thou generous, thou rever'd espoused Nymph,
 Daughter of Nereus, hail! Worthy thyself,
 Worthy thy sons these things hast thou dispos'd.
 Goddess, at thy high bidding I will cease
 My sorrows, and, his funeral rites perform'd,
 Go to the cave of Pelion, where these arms

PEL.

1392. To walk through the sea without wetting the feet was a mark of divinity.
Schol.

1398. The cave of Sepias was in a promontory near Iolcos: here Peleus first wooed Thetis.

Encircled first that beauteous form divine.
He, who is train'd in wisdom's lore, his bride
Will take from generous lineage, and betroth
His daughter to the virtuous, nor desire
Alliance with the base, e'en though she bring
A rich and splendid dowry to his house;
For from the gods such shall no grace attend.

CHOR. With various hand the gods dispense our fates:
Now show'ring various blessings, which our hopes
Dar'd not aspire to; now controlling ills
We deem'd inevitable: thus the god
To these hath giv'n an end exceeding thought.
Such is the awful fortune of this day.

THE END.





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